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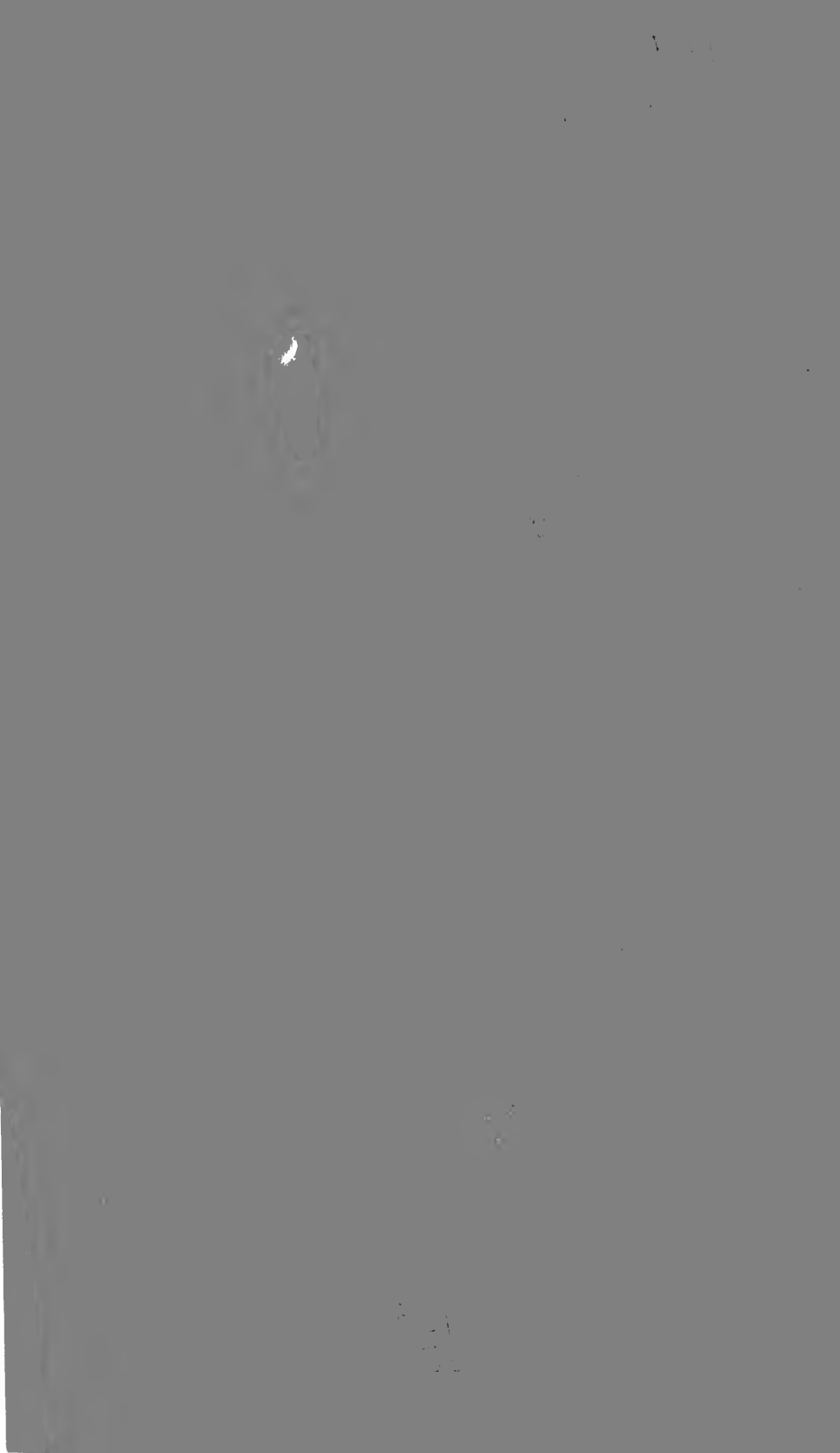
WITH THE COMPLIMENTS OF J. W. P. JENKS.

# HUNTING IN FLORIDA

IN

1874.

*John W. P.*  
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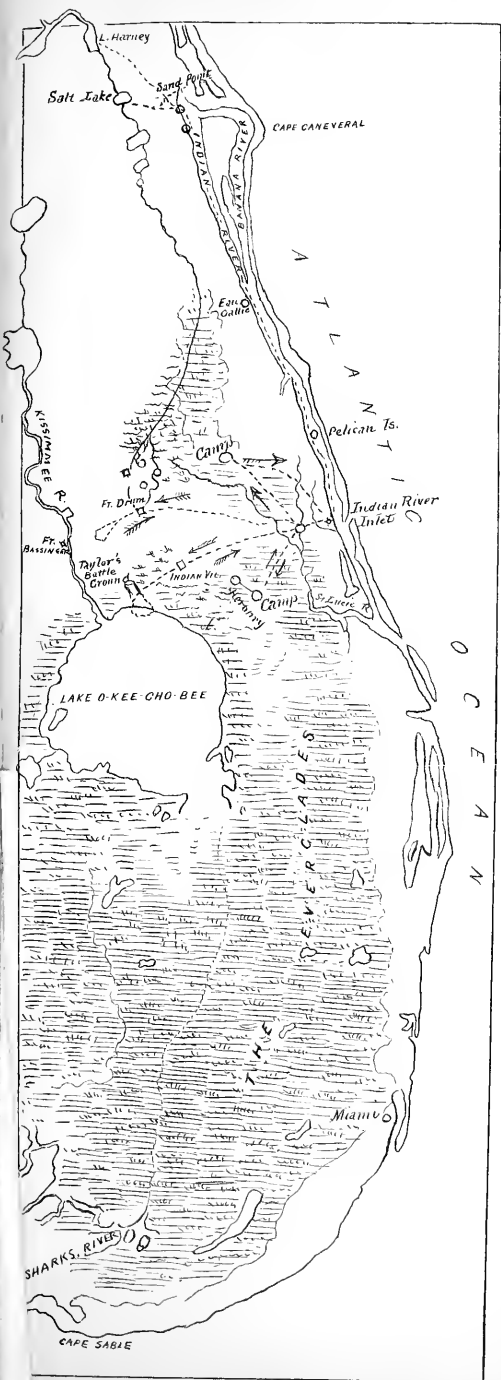


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# HUNTING IN FLORIDA.

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Though a native of Massachusetts, it was my fortune, at the age of thirteen, to enjoy squirrel, opossum and fox hunting in interior Virginia; at nineteen, deer, 'coon and bear chasing in southwestern Georgia; at twenty-five, plover, duck and hawk shooting in southeastern New England; at forty, a sight of wild chamois in the high Alps, and at fifty-five, a camp life of fifty consecutive days in the miasmatic swamps and everglades around Lake Okechohee in southern Florida. The object of this narrative is to give a detailed account of this latter experience in the most forbidding of all wild regions; but to the naturalist a perfect elysium.

The mention of Florida suggests the invalid, but should not in the case of myself or my three companions, the one an experienced collector of forty, inured to all the hardships of camp life, and recognized by naturalists as Doctor P., and the other two, youths of eighteen, inexperienced, but enthusiastic, whom we will call Erwin and Fred.

For hunting-dress outfit, I was provided with a suit of sail-cloth, colored yellowish-brown or butternut, to resemble dead leaves, the sack-coat prepared with ten pockets, besides one, full size of the skirt, for large specimens; the pants with six pockets, two blue flannel shirts, with inside pockets for watch, money and photographs, all wrapped in oil silk bags, (carefully keeping paper money from contact with the oil silk surface, by first enclosing it in an envelope,) military boots and brogans, and four pair of thick woolen socks. Any sort of vest is an incumbrance on hunting excursions. A huswife well provided with sewing materials, extra buttons, pieces of cloth in variety for mending garments and dressing wounds, was not omitted.

For obtaining game, and for camp constructing, I had a double-barreled breech-loader; in the waist-belt on the left side, a large size revolver, and on the right side, a claw-hatchet with wrist-string in the handle; sundry small traps, bunches of cord, insect-nets, etc. At least one breech-loading rifle should be in every hunting party.

For preserving and transporting specimens, I found a tin knapsack, constructed with various apartments for alcoholic vials, lunches, medicine-box and eggs, very convenient. At least ten gallons of alcohol and twenty pounds of arsenic were provided, besides some hundreds of muslin bags of different sizes, for keeping specimens distinct when thrown into one large jar. Convenient instruments, in duplicate, for skinning birds and animals and for blowing eggs, completed the general outfit.

Two o'clock P. M., January 29, 1874, found myself and party steaming out of the harbor of P., in southern New England, bound direct to Savannah. A sudden fit of indigestion admonished Fred to seek cascading quarters, before we were fairly out of sight of land, whither I followed him in a short time. The Doctor and Erwin proved invulnerable, and greatly enjoyed our distress. How singular that of all the "ills that flesh is heir to," the most distressing never awakens a particle of sympathy from the unsuffering, but rather mirth and cruel hectoring. Happily for Fred and myself, we were booked for the same stateroom, to which having retreated, through the live-long night and succeeding day we were as sympathizing as the Siamese twins. On the third day, my sea-sickness fled more suddenly than it came, on hearing the cry on deck, "Porpoises! porpoises! all round." Hastening up, I found we were in a school of that species of Cetacea called *Delphinus delphis* and quite unlike the common porpoise. This latter is often seen entering bays and even ascending large rivers for miles; while *Delphinus* rarely approaches soundings. Looking from the deck of the steamer, I had an excellent opportunity for observing their swift motions, and the upward and downward movement of the tail, in contrast with its horizontal movement in fishes. At regular intervals they would rise to the surface to breathe through their single spiracle on the summit of the head; but exhaling and inhaling in an incredibly brief period of time. The hot air from the lungs, surcharged with moisture, is instantly

condensed to vapor, giving to the careless observer the appearance of spouting water, which none of the Cetacea ever do. Celebrated for their swiftness, they played around the vessel, changing their position from side to side, by sometimes passing under the bows and sometimes under the stern, but never disconcerted by the speed of the steamer, though plowing the waves at the rate of ten knots per hour. Both jaws are armed with numerous conical teeth, enabling them to feed upon the gregarious tribes of fishes. Robert L. Pell says "it commits great ravages among the enormous shoals of flying fish (*exocætus volitans*), inhabiting the temperate latitudes, and it is a very remarkable fact that he necessarily seizes it as it endeavors to escape him, behind; and were it not for provident nature, he could not swallow it on account of its wings. The moment, however, it enters his mouth, some internal management reverses the fish, and it passes down his throat head first. This cetaceous animal much resembles the porpoise, but has a longer snout and more slender body." In this quotation from the address of Mr. Pell, before the American Institute, May 17, 1858, we suspect either he, or the reporter, rather mixed accounts, by confounding the cetacean *Delphinus* with the scale-fish *Coryphæne*, species of both genera being popularly called Dolphins, though the former is a mammal and the latter a true fish. According to Captain Basil Hall, it is the *Coryphæne* that "commits great ravages among the flying fish," and an old whaler by my side fully confirms his account, but as confidently denies Mr. Pell's. Can any of my readers testify to ever having seen any species of porpoise pursue and feast upon flying-fish?

*Delphinus delphis* is regarded as the true Dolphin of the ancients, to which the Greeks paid divine honors, placing its image in their temples, and impressing it on their coins, though never actually imitating nature in their representations of it, but rather idealizing it, as embodying physical and moral perfections beyond those of the human race.

At noon, we passed Cape Hatteras with a perfectly calm sea, very unlike some of my former passings of it in a sailing vessel in my youthful days. At 9 P. M. Sunday, we anchored in Tybee Sound, and at dawn proceeded up the Savannah River to the city. We conveyed our luggage across the city in a drenching rain, and started at 5 P. M. in the cars for a night ride of two hundred and

fifty miles to Jacksonville. The contrast between the station and car accommodations of southern New England and southern Georgia was painfully striking. Toward dawn our train passed over the hard-fought battle-ground of Olustee, where the Union troops were disastrously defeated in the late civil war. Anticipating our arrival at the place, I had sought information among the passengers, and fortunately found one who was in the fight on the Southern side. To my eager inquiries, he pointed out the graves of the Union soldiers who fell in the battle and in the hasty retreat of their comrades were left on the field, and I knew that there lay two of my former pupils whose lives had been laid upon the altar of their country. Another, who commanded a company of cavalry in the fight, was taken captive on the retreat and thrown into prison, escaping only to die in a few weeks of the disease contracted during his prison-life.

At 10 A. M. arrived at Jacksonville—four and one-half days from snow and ice, to orange groves laden with fruit.

Making inquiries for best route to Lake Okechobee, I found it was a “terra incognita” to even Floridians. The publisher of a recent map of the State pointed to it with the remark, “It is said to be there, but I have never met one who has seen it. Should you find it and return, having escaped its miasma and reptiles, do not fail to give me a call, and verify or correct my map for the next edition.” The papers were teeming with sensational stories about the wonders of the lake; beautiful islands, on which are castle ruins, grassy plains and nondescript animals, among which latter were, “spiders of four pounds’ weight!” I was also informed of a party, just a day or two in advance of me, bound for the lake by a western approach to it. This information at once decided me in favor of an approach from the east, and with only two days’ delay in Jacksonville, I found myself and party on the little steamer “Lollie Boy” headed for Salt Lake, expecting to arrive there by 12 M. Saturday.

To quote from the “Floridian Peninsula:” “Such entire ignorance of a body of water with a superficies of twelve hundred square miles, in the midst of a State settled nearly half a century before any other in our Union, which had been governed for years by Spanish, by English, and by Americans, well illustrates the impassable character of those vast swamps and dense cypresses

known as the Everglades; an impenetrability so complete as almost to justify the assertion of the State Engineer, so late as 1855: 'These lands are now, and will continue to be, as much unknown as the interior of Africa, or the mountain sources of the Amazon!'" The sequel of my narrative will show how completely two months more sufficed, through the perseverance of two of my party, united to two others that subsequently joined them, together with my own independent efforts, to dispel the vagueness and even romance attending a knowledge of its existence.

Though the area of the single State of Florida compares with that of New England in the ratio of 59 to 62, three-fourths of its surface is much of the year under water; and this fact will largely account for the ignorance concerning its physical features. None but wild Indians, cattle-rangers and naturalists can be expected to wade through its swamps, risk its miasmata, and brave its dangerous animals. From the first two, little information can be expected, and the latter have but recently been attracted to its more inaccessible regions.

The St. John's is an anomaly among rivers. Its source or sources, like those of the Nile, are still unknown. It flows a little west of north, till near its mouth, for at least three hundred miles, but with a change of level for that entire distance of not more than six feet. Still it cannot be called a sluggish stream, which is all the more remarkable, "when it is considered that not an eminence in East Florida attains the height of two hundred feet;" and where all the water comes from, to give for a hundred and fifty miles from its mouth an average breadth of about two miles, in apparent contradiction of all the hydraulic laws of physical geography, is the never-ceasing wonder, as day and night one steams over its surface. Ascending, the voyager traverses lake after lake; some extensive enough to give a water horizon, and fully justifying the alleged meaning of the Indian name Il-la-ka, "a river of many lakes"; though it may here be stated that an educated Choctaw chief defined the name as meaning, "it hath its own way, is alone contrary to every other;" a signification quite as pertinent to its physical character as the former. Its unnavigable portion seems to issue from an immense prairie covered with long saw grass, a region neighbor to the everglade and culminating in it. The great rains of the summer are here collected

as in a reservoir, till the low latitudinal water-shed is overflowed, and the sources of the northern flowing St. John's are confounded with that of the southern flowing Kissimmee. After the annual great rain-fall is over, the running away of the waters reveals the submerged dividing line, and leaves the streams distinct, with an easterly and westerly water-shed of varying longitudinal width, but never extensive even in the driest seasons. Such an anomalous condition was long suspected by those engineers who had approximated the sources of both streams, but it was left to the observations of my party, so far as I know, to confirm the view, as will appear in the sequel.

Nearing the wharf at Hibernia, a few miles above Jacksonville, I was most agreeably surprised to find my life-long friend, the late Professor Jeffries Wyman, at whose house, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, I had dined a few days before, and whom I supposed still in New England. Forced by chronic complaints, he was spending his twenty-third-winter, if I remember rightly, in Florida, and as the event proved his last. Mitigating his tendencies to pulmonary disease by a southern winter, and to catarrhal by a White Mountain autumn, he had for nearly a quarter of a century alternated between the two extreme latitudes, and thus prolonged a most useful life, till in the issue he left behind a reputation that established him in the line of Comparative Anatomy as the peer of Agassiz and Owen.

At the moment of embarking on the little steamer, two ladies came on board whose ways at once suggested the "school-marm." When informed by the clerk that every stateroom was already assigned, he was taken all aback by the reply, "Oh, any of these gentlemen will sleep on the saloon floor, just for one night." On hearing this remark, my first impulse was to put myself outside of that crowd at once. But observing that none of the younger passengers responded favorably to the appeal, I volunteered the half of my room, and induced the Doctor to give up the other half. Without a single "thank you" in reply, we were speedily dispossessed, and not possessed again, each day of the voyage proving so charming to the "ladies" that they concluded to remain aboard and return to Jacksonville with the boat. Gallantry however had its reward, though at the expense of a hard couch for successive nights.



The steamer stopping the second day for an hour at Volusia to "wood up," an opportunity was afforded for examining the shell mound upon which the village is built. It is formed exclusively of fresh-water species, mainly Ampullarias and Paludinas with some Unios, as are all the mounds upon the river from a few miles above its mouth, and has evidently resulted from being the dwelling-place of some of the earliest inhabitants during the successive stages of its formation, and the casting away of the shells, after extracting their contents for food. Professor Wyman, than whom no archæologist has given more attention to their investigation, speaks with great confidence of their pre-Indian origin. My brief stay resulted in unearthing a few pieces of pottery, at varying depths, and in determining the river line of the mound to be at least one hundred feet, with a height of six or eight feet, and of an uncertain extent inland, owing to the forest growth on the top of it.

The shell mounds of Florida, whether upon the coast or the banks of its rivers, and especially those abounding upon the St. John's from near its source to its mouth, must not be confounded with the sand or burial mounds no less abundant, but scattered all over the State, and giving no evidence of ever having been used for dwelling-places. In the fourth memoir of the Peabody Academy of Science, Vol. 1. 1875, Professor Wyman has presented in a volume of about one hundred pages quarto, finely illustrated, the result of his researches and conclusions, in respect to forty-eight fresh-water shell mounds on the banks of the upper St. John's, and to which the reader is referred for the most complete account hitherto published of these most interesting relics.

Our nights upon the St. John's were moonless, but the darkness did not prevent at least one side issue up a narrow creek, for an hour, to leave provision stores and *whiskey*, at the camp of a woodman. As we threaded our way in the Cimmerian gloom with interlacing branches overhead, and sometimes sweeping the upper deck, the wild fowl were startled from their slumbers, and the owls roused to a vigorous protest against the invasion of their domains. But the lynx-eyed pilot, who successfully steered his way along the tortuous channel with not even the friendly glare of a lantern at the bow, was to me the greatest wonder of the excursion.

Again in the St. John's, we found ourselves at daylight nearing a bluff, where we left Professor Wyman and his annual camping companion, G. A. Peabody, Esq., of Salem, Massachusetts. To their great disgust, a squatter had taken possession of their old camping-site, and already erected a log-house in the orange-laden grove. Appearing at the door with rifle in hand, he saluted the *old-comers* with "How d'ye, gen'lmen, come to squat here?"

In the afternoon another side issue to the left took us into Lake Beresford to leave another squatter, who had migrated from Georgia, and at a venture was being landed in a swamp with a wife and several children between the ages of two months and twelve years. As their scanty furniture was handed out and the family left on the beach in the rain, with no shelter, and miles away from any human sympathizers, three hearty cheers were given by their departing fellow-passengers for the American pluck, male and female, that ever adapts itself to physical surroundings, however forlorn the prospect.

Once more on the St. John's, we found its breadth steadily narrowing, till it was reduced to less than two hundred feet,—an advantage to the hunters on board, of which they were not slow to avail themselves, in popping away at every alligator and large bird that appeared at short or long range. Soon, however, the banks recede again and suddenly, as the steamer enters Lake Monroe, an expanse of water covering an area of at least twenty square miles. This crossed, the bluffs on either side are well-studded at advantageous points with shell mounds till the last great lake upon the river is sailed over, and the region of water, prairie and swamp is fully reached. At high water it makes little difference, in this region, whether the steamer keeps the channel or not, her sailing course well illustrating the principle of "cutting across lots." At half stage, as we found it, the channel was sufficiently disclosed to be followed, and equally well illustrated the doubling track of a hare with the hounds close at his heels. For a bird to rise from one side with the intention of proceeding but a short distance up or down stream, and alighting on the other side, and succeed twice in succession, would establish its claim to something of intelligence considerably superior to instinct. At length, growing weary of the monotony, I proposed to the captain to set me ashore and let me have a hunt of a hundred yards across

the base of a peninsula, while the steamer was doubling it at fifty times that distance. "Will you risk the snakes, alligators and quicksands," was the squelching reply.

Leaving the St. John's, a few miles of navigation through Snake River, still more tortuous in its windings, and whose abrupt turnings often required the boat hands to jump ashore and push the bow round with poles, brought us into Salt Lake, so called from the saline taste of its water, a phenomenon as yet unexplained. Our voyage was terminated on the opposite side of the lake, by grounding the boat an eighth of a mile from the shore. A scow came off for us, having on it four cords of wood for the steamer. As our captain was supplied, he declined taking it, and so our luggage to the amount of as much greater weight was piled on the wood, besides fifteen or twenty passengers, and the scow pushed off. Half-way to the shore it grounded, and then the boatmen exclaimed, "Why, here is just where it grounded going out." A fair specimen of "Cracker" calculation, of which this was our first, but by no means our last lesson. With the grounding of the scow, a race commenced on the part of the mule and ox-teams waiting for us on shore, to see which should reach us first to secure a load of goods and passengers for Sand Point, on the Atlantic coast, six miles distant. When they reached us the cart-bodies were just even with the top of the water. For my party I selected a single mule team. For the bridle, a cord passed through the mouth and over the top of the head. Another single cord to the driver on the bare back, answered for a rein. A leathern band supported the thills, and a collar made of straw, with wooden hames and short chains, completed the harness. Had the traces been of rawhide, the whole arrangement would have been unique as a specimen of thriftlessness. Having packed on our baggage of eight hundred pounds, with two of us on top to balance it, we started for the shore, apparently better able to carry the little mule than it to draw us. The intervening six miles gave us our first Florida lesson in walking. Midway we passed a large sand burial mound, from the top of which Professor Wyman had exhumed a skeleton buried only a foot deep, though six feet below pieces of charcoal and decayed bones were discovered.

While still in the woods, our teamster commenced unloading at

a hut constructed in part of logs, and in part of frame-work covered with boards split out by hand.

"Is this Sand Point?" I inquired.

"This is Sand Point."

"But where is the ocean?"

"A mile and a 'af, further on."

"Were you not to take us to the ocean, where we could find a sail-boat?"

"You bargained for Sand Point, and this house is where the Post Office used to be. To go to the wharf will cost you a dollar more."

"Did you not know when the bargain was made, that we expected you to take us to the shore?"

"A bargain's a bargain, and if you want me to take you to the shore, I will come to-morrow night or Monday morning, and do it for another dollar."

Here, then, was our first lesson in "Cracker" honesty. The captain of the boat having sent us ashore in the wilderness, fifteen minutes before dinner, when our appetites were well whetted up for a bountiful repast, and which our walk of six miles had not in the least diminished, we concluded to dismiss our *honest* teamster and stop over Sunday at the hut yclept in the guide-book, Sand Point Hotel.

The next day, inquiring for a church, was informed by mine host of a Sabbath School recently started in a school-house not far distant, he had "hearn tell of," but had never seen. Threading my way along a cow-path, I came upon the building, just as the school of six pupils and two teachers, one of whom was my honest teamster of the day before, was assembling. The floor was of rough boards, the apertures for light without glass, and the long benches without backs, but the Bible was in the building and the tender youth were taught its sacred truths. Outside of my own tent it was my last recognized Sabbath for seven weeks.

Seeking negotiation for a sail-boat, to take us a hundred miles further south by the Indian River to Fort Capron, the first boatman presenting himself was so under the influence of liquor that he was almost incoherent, though profuse in praises of his boat and his skill in managing it; and by way of recommending himself to us, declared he was the Indian River correspondent of

“The Forest and Stream.” Having declined his services, we fortunately secured the best boatman and boat on the river.

Betime Monday morning, we had our luggage stowed upon the sail-boat, and commenced a voyage of one hundred miles further south upon the Indian River, a misnomer for an interior sea or rather lagoon, running parallel with the Atlantic Ocean and connecting with it by infrequent inlets. Its salt water abounds in innumerable varieties of fish, while the shores on either side are no less attractive to the sportsman. In some places, the banks recede from each other four or five miles, in others not more than fifty yards. Oyster-bed reefs obstruct navigation for vessels larger than common sail-boats, but channels might be easily dredged across them for the passage of a small steamer, and thus open this more auspicious region of Florida to the tourist and invalid.

Anxious to reach our most southern point of destination, we restrained ourselves from capturing either fish, reptile, bird or mammal, though the temptation was constantly presented; especially when, to reef sail, we ran into the mouth of St. Sebastian River, and saw upon the beach fresh tracks of deer, wild-cats, and pumas. At sundown we anchored hard by the hut of our boatman’s brother-in-law, in which we found shelter and repose, though not upon beds of down, but rather of dried hides. The larder furnished venison steak and hominy for supper and breakfast, besides the inevitable pork and yam of a “cracker’s” repast.

The western shore at this point presents geological features of remarkable interest. That portion ordinarily washed by the waves presents a bluff, six to eight feet in height, formed apparently of fragments of shells cemented into firm rock by pressure or heat, but honey-combed with cylindrical orifices six to fifteen inches in diameter extending perpendicularly from the surface of the bluff to a line corresponding with the level of the beach at low-water mark. The appearance is as though a sudden overflow of the waves had deposited a mass of broken shells to the depth of ten feet, more or less, around the closely growing trunks of an extensive grove of palmetto trees; and then, the shelly mass having consolidated ere the trees had decayed, the moulds of the trunks remain, a geological wonder. The same foundation structure is said to extend inland beneath the soil to an unknown distance, having been tested a half mile from the shore, and only kept de-

nuded on and near the beach by the more powerful action of occasional storms. The geologic explanation of this unique feature is a desideratum.

Between watching the "looming" of distant "points" ahead and astern, the "sailing" of pelicans and the "breaking" of huge sharks, at times almost under the bow of the boat, the hours of the second day whiled away, till at 4 p. m. we landed at Fort Capron, the projected base of our swamp operations. Stepping from the boat, a Yankee explorer bound also to Lake Okechobee, grasped my hand, and in a trice told me that he had brought out a sail-boat all the way from New York City, with the intention of having it carried across the country, sixty miles, by an ox-team, to fort Bassinger, on Kissimee River, down which he proposed to navigate till it should usher him into the lake, and, moreover, he was only waiting to make up a party of four, having already secured one. Here was a dilemma. The addition of my party would make the number six, while the utmost capacity of his boat would accommodate but four. It was, however, quickly decided that we should all go to the river together, and then mature our plans according to circumstances. To secure the services of an ox-team and a driver, the "Explorer" and Erwin volunteered a tramp of ten miles to the cabin of a "cracker" who was understood to be able to furnish the team. On their return the following day they reported themselves successful, and Saturday fixed upon as the date of our departure, the "cracker" engaging to take the boat and all luggage to the river at the point designated for forty dollars.

Meanwhile in-door accommodations were furnished us at Fort Capron by "mine host" Judge P., to whom I had a letter of introduction from a former pupil. Erwin and Fred, at the suggestion of Doct. P., commenced initiating themselves into camp-life, by erecting their tents in the yard. I donned my hunting-suit and commenced collecting, not a little encouraged in that my first seven shots were each successful in securing the game.

As the day of our departure drew near, I was informed that we should pass through a settlement of outlaws, ten miles distant, every man of whom had left his native region for that region's good, and located himself outside of "law and gospel" just over the frontier line of civilization. The owner of our team was accounted a leader among them, and by way of cautioning me, my

informant related, under the promise of secrecy, the particulars of a murder, within three weeks, by two of the gang, of an honest, industrious German, who had made for himself a home just outside of their settlement. He, being a man of education and some degree of refinement, not affiliating with them, and withal being envied the possession of a better orange plantation than they had, though wholly the result of his own industry, it was decided to get rid of him on the damning charge of being a stealer and killer of cattle. Among Floridian "crackers" this is a far more heinous crime than that of taking human life, and once fastened upon a man, if only on suspicion, immediately puts him out of the protection of such law as may exist. Finding their victim could not be driven away, their usual resort to treachery was adopted, and the deed committed to two desperate ruffians, one a young man of nineteen, whom we will call Tom, and who will figure largely in the sequel of this narrative. To him, as the story was told me, our team owner promised his daughter in marriage, if successful. At first, every effort was made to provoke a quarrel that should give some shadow of an excuse for the execution of their plot; but the imperturbably good nature of the honest German would not beguile him into a dispute. At length under the pretense of desiring some orange-slips from his excellent grove, they called at his cabin and asked for dinner. Both dinner and slips were cheerfully given them, and then requesting their host to set them across the deep creek about a quarter of a mile from his house, he went with them for the purpose, but did not return. Soon after leaving, his wife heard four gun and three pistol shots in quick succession: but surmising they were fired at game, waited till near dark for her husband's return, and then repaired to the creek, only to be horrified with the sight of blood in the boat still securely fastened on the other side. It was subsequently proven that the assassins thought to cover up the evidence of their guilt by dragging the body a half mile below, and thrusting its dismembered fragments into alligator holes. The wife, snatching up her young child, traversed the gloomy wilderness for ten miles, at the dead of night to Fort Capron and reported the deed. The following week the sheriff of the county with a posse of ten men, started for the settlement with the intention of arresting the guilty parties. When within five miles of it he was met by a delegation in-

forming him that his design was known, and the whole neighborhood was assembled in one cabin with plenty of arms and provisions, and ready to endure a siege, but no one could be arrested while a man or woman remained alive. Under these circumstances and considering "discretion the better part of valor," the sheriff beat a hasty retreat. Thus the matter stood two weeks subsequent, as I was about to enter the community, my informant closing up his narration with the remark that he had felt it his duty to let me know the character of those to whom I was about to trust myself and my party, but cautioned me on no account to breathe a suspicion of any one or reveal the secret to either of my companions, lest it might be suspected by the outlaws that we had some knowledge available to the government, and, on the principle that "dead men tell no tales" find our last resting place in concealed alligator holes, even if their cupidity should permit us to return from the swamp after they had fleeced us to the extent we might permit. Forewarned, forearmed, I the more persistently determined to penetrate the mystery and walk the strand of Lake Okechobee.

Saturday, punctually at 12 o'clock, our teamster appeared with two yoke of steers attached to a double set of shaky wheels. In an hour or two the boat was launched upon the axles and loaded with our provisions of coffee, hominy, hard-tack and pork; our ammunition, of powder and shot; our preserving materials, of salt, arsenic and alcohol (the latter poisoned, lest the teamsters should be tempted to try the preserving of themselves with it); our capturing apparatus, of fish-nets, insect-nets, etc., (guns, pistols and hatchets are on such trips to be a constant appendage of the person); beside the camera and necessary chemicals of the "Explorer" for procuring pictures of the ruins said to be in the Lake. When ready to start, I saw plainly that the weight was too much for the wheels, and predicted a break-down, to which, however, no other one of the party would listen.

The cabin of the teamster lay upon the direct route to the lake, ten miles distant, where we expected to make our first encampment. All went well till we entered the bordering swamp of Five Mile creek, when, after wading deeper and deeper for half a mile, and the oxen were just ready to plunge in all over for a swim across the channel, crash went one of the wheels. There was no



alternative but to wade back to dry land and camp without our tent. Fortunately, our provisions and cooking utensils were on the top of the load, and, by judicious distribution of the weight, easily borne back. From a stagnant pool near our camping place we obtained water for our coffee, after frightening away from the margin the lizards, etc., and then straining it to get rid of the smaller nuisances, both vegetable and animal. Rolled up in our blankets, we composed ourselves to sleep with clouds of mosquitoes settling down upon every exposed spot of flesh, and amid the hooting of owls and the howling of wild beasts, having just before the break-down crossed the fresh track of a puma. To repair the damage there was no alternative but for the teamster and his driver to push on with the oxen to his home and return as soon as a new set of wheels could be procured. At noon, on Monday, he reappeared with a stouter set, for which he had meanwhile made an entirely new axle. Transferring the load, the old wheels were left in their tracks, where five weeks later they still remained. Reaching the bank of the creek, it was found that neither oxen nor wheels could touch bottom. To effect a crossing, the leading yoke was taken off, and swum over, and so placed on the opposite shore as to be quickly hitched on again. The driver stripped naked, as well as the Explorer and Erwin, the former to swim at the heads of the oxen at the risk of being gored in their wild plunges, the other two to swim astern and guide the boat against the current. The moment the steers got foothold on the opposite bank, they refused to move, leaving the wheels sinking in the quicksands and the boat rising from the axles. It was a critical moment, but the leaders being hitched on and a simultaneous shout raised by all, a "long pull and a strong pull altogether" landed the boat on the bank and relieved our anxiety. Five miles further brought us to the clearing of our "teamster." Selecting a place for a camp, I went on alone to a well near the cabin, and observed two men dressing a hog hung to the limb of a tree. Coming suddenly upon them around a corner of the cabin, I noticed that the younger of the two instantly dropped his work and rushed for the cabin door, out of which he soon issued with a double barreled gun in his hand, and stood defiant. Apparently not noticing him, I passed back to my companions, wondering at his behavior. Soon our Teamster took me aside and asked why I

wore a pistol-belt with U. S. on the buckle. I told him I had borrowed it from my cousin, who was color-bearer of his company during the late war. "Then you are not a United States Marshal?" To me the idea was so ridiculous I could not restrain my laughter, and he returned to his cabin. Subsequently I learned that the young man was "Tom," and the United States belt with its pistol on one side and claw-hatchet on the other, together with the gun in my hand, had aroused his suspicion that I had come with a posse in disguise for his arrest. "The criminal doth fear each bush an officer." Spreading our tent and smoking out the mosquitoes with pine knots, Fred and myself slept soundly with the expectation of rising at daylight to renew our trip to the lake.

In the morning we were told by our Teamster that the load was twice as heavy as he promised to carry, and he should go no further unless it was reduced one-third at least, and he was paid sixty dollars instead of forty. Lesson second in "Cracker" honesty. Fred and myself volunteered to remain, while Doctor P. and Erwin insisted upon advancing. Assuring Erwin I should see the lake before leaving Florida, if health permitted, he still chose to take his risk with the Explorer, alleging that he left New England with that sole object in view, and now saw no other certainty but to go with the boat. Poor fellow, he went on, and he saw the lake, and circumnavigated it, but while lying on his back most of the time for five weeks, shaking with fever and ague, hardly firing his gun during the whole trip. Of all this I was happily ignorant till I found him on my return from the swamps at Fort Capron, unable to walk across the room.

Just before they were ready to start, the Teamster came to me and said he had in the woods another pair of steers that six months before had been yoked. These Tom would catch and with a light cart take the luggage of Fred and myself on the morrow, and carry us too, except in the deepest wading-places. By following their wheel-tracks, and with a lighter load, we should easily overtake them. Besides, he had learned from a neighbor during the evening that Fort Bassinger was not more than ten miles from the lake; moreover, this same neighbor had left a boat at the fort, in which he would take Fred and myself to the lake and back to the fort in one day, while the oxen were resting. Then we would return to his cabin together, and let the rest of the party pursue

their plan of exploring the lake. For this service he must receive four dollars per day, including Tom's wages, who was at work for him. The plan seeming feasible, I concluded to adopt it, and after much persuasion obtained Tom's consent, who was not yet, as I afterwards learned, entirely free from the suspicion of my being a United States officer sent to arrest him.

After frivolous delays of several hours, Tom started for the woods and toward night drove into the enclosure a "bunch" of cattle having one of the steers wanted. In singling this one out with the lasso, it leaped the fence and was quickly out of sight again. He must now go a mile and get a neighbor, who, by the way, was his reputed companion-assassin, and the twain go two miles in another direction and borrow some dogs, with which to catch the runaway steer. About ten at night, they passed my tent, Tom ahead on a horse, holding one end of a rope around the horns of the steer; his companion on foot, holding on to a rope around one hind leg of the animal, which had been caught by the nose with bloodhounds. The next morning the woods were again scoured for the other steer, which was brought in similarly about noon. An inspection of the cart decided, in the mind of Tom, that the wheels were too weak, and he must borrow a pair from a neighbor some eight miles away. This he would do next day and be ready to start Friday morning, three days behind time. Yielding at length to my remonstrances, he started soon after dinner to exchange the wheels and break in the wild steers, returning past midnight. In the morning, the last caught steer was utterly exhausted, and the third day of delay must after all be spent in hunting up and breaking in another. Friday morning we started, the first essay of the wild creatures being to upset the load in their zig-zagging through "a right smart palmetery"—rough palmetto-roots above ground.

The log cabin of our Teamster was double, the two rooms being connected by a thoroughfare. But it was a palace in comparison with all the other residences in the settlement. A mile on our way, we came to the cabin of Tom's companion-assassin, consisting of a single room made of logs loosely piled upon each other, in which dwelt a family of four. A track of loosely scattered feathers leading from a sapling close by the cabin to the swamp indicated where a wild cat had dragged away a hen the previous

night, snatching it from within two feet of the heads of the sleeping inmates. A mile further on we reached the shelter of Tom's father's family. It was a roof of palmetto leaves, supported on posts, the four sides entirely open to the air. Here dwelt the father and mother, two grown-up sons, two grown-up daughters, and four younger children. A short distance beyond we swam a creek, just narrow enough to save the cart from going to the bottom before the steers gained footing on the other side. Hard by we passed the last evidence of "Cracker" life, consisting of a shelter of boughs in the form of one-half of an A tent, beneath which a hermit had slept for five years. Soon, the trail pursued thus far ended, and following the wheel-tracks of our predecessors we struck the Alligator Flats, and during the rest of the day, mile after mile, waded axle-deep in the mud and water. Instead of riding on the cart, as was promised us, we were in constant fear of our oxen giving out from sheer weakness, so that Fred and myself carefully avoided adding even the weight of our guns to the load, though Tom did not hesitate to mount his burly form upon the cart-tongue most of the time, pretending that he could discern the guiding track beneath the water better by looking down upon it. As the deadly poisonous moccasin-snake, more to be dreaded than the terrible rattlesnake, abounded in the flats, and frequently rose up within six feet of us, throwing themselves into a striking attitude and displaying their crooked fangs in fearful warning, we plodded most of the time behind the cart, that the splashing of the oxen might frighten away the reptiles. At length, in the greater depth of the water and thickness of the grass, Tom declared himself unable to distinguish the cart-ruts, and it became necessary for Fred and myself to go before and indicate the guiding tracks by each taking one and beating it out with our feet. Thus we passed hour after hour constantly whipping the water with long sticks to frighten away the snakes, though occasionally chilled with the sight of a moccasin gliding off a tussock of grass and concealing himself, neither could tell where. Towards sundown we came to a pine island a few feet in diameter, with just enough of dry land for our fire, and Tom to lie down beside it. Beyond, being one stretch of water as far as the eye could reach, we haul up, turn the oxen out to feed, bake our yams, barbecue our meat, curl up on the top of our luggage in the cart and go to sleep winking at the stars.

The next day is but a repetition of the previous, only the wading is deeper and the wriggling snakes are more numerous. "Familiarity," however, "breeds contempt," even in the matter of exposure to the cold, clammy touch of a snake and danger from its deadly fangs, as well as in dissimilar experiences of human nature,—a contempt leading Fred and myself to often ease our blistered feet by throwing our high-topped boots upon the cart and substituting brogans, or even going barefoot.

A distinguishing feature of these water-prairies is an occasional stretch of cypress-clumps—clusters of trees presenting beautiful rounded outlines, very appropriately termed "Blue Mountains." Their attraction, however, is entirely upon the outside, and in the far distance. Approached, their blending foliage separates to the view and becomes scragged, while their bases are sunk in a most forbidding morass. Through such a "cypress-slue" we forced our way, and emerged upon a clear, open prairie, where we camped for the night. Crossing this, we found ourselves during the forenoon of the third day entering an old military trail and on solid ground. Surmising that we must be near the fort, Fred at 11 o'clock pushed forward, and I saw no more of him till sundown, when he returned and reported an interminable prairie three hours in advance and no signs of the Kissimmee. Not much like overtaking the advance party, we thought; but there was no alternative, and while we were deliberating what was best to do on the morrow, the double-yoked team hove in sight on its return, having that morning left the "Explorer" and his party at Fort Bassinger as agreed, but found the fort sixty miles from the lake, instead of ten. Nor was there any neighbor's boat at the deserted fort, the Indians having probably stolen it, etc., etc. The truth now flashed upon my mind, and I needed no more proof that the "teamster's" story was manufactured for the purpose of alluring me on to secure his four dollars per day. Lesson third in "Cracker" honesty.

Our encampment for the night was near a creek whose bed was dry, but in which our Teamster affirmed he had sometimes found water flowing south, and at other times north, according as the region on either side of the east and west trail had received more abundant supplies of rain. A careful observation of the whole region fully convinced me that here we find in the wet season one

(perhaps the most southern) of the many affluents of the mighty St. John's. So little, however, is the change of level that out of the same reservoir, and by the same channel, there heads, at times, another creek taking a southward direction into St. Lucie Sound, and on the northwest border of the same reservoir is found issuing at high water an affluent of the Kissimmee, by whose channel a portion of the waters of this same great central reservoir find their way into Lake Okechobee, from whose more exposed surface excessive evaporation is constantly going on. This opinion is sustained by the rain charts of the Smithsonian Institute, which "show that the peninsula of Florida is the region in which the rain-fall is heaviest east of the Rocky Mountains, and further, that in the peninsula itself the curves of the greatest rain encroach upon the head waters of the St. John's, though still more upon those of the rivers flowing south into Lake Okechobee, and west into the Gulf of Mexico."

Fred and myself had hardly erected our tent when it began to drizzle, with indications of abundant rain, but fortunately for us, not realized. Ere we slept, a brother of the Teamster appeared from beyond the Kissimmee with his mother, wife and seven children ranging in age from three weeks to twelve years, all riding in a cart drawn by a single yoke of oxen. Two of the older children were shaking with the fever and ague, to whom my prescriptions of quinine brought speedy relief. The children found shelter during the night beneath the cart, while the adults lay down upon the damp ground, wrapped in blankets. Long before light we were cooking our breakfast, preparatory to an early start, when a demand was made upon our scanty store to feed the hungry mouths of the new comers—a hospitality we were poorly prepared to extend, but which it was not in our heart to refuse, especially when pleaded for by the wistful looks of the little innocents.

Relieving *our* jaded oxen, by transferring to our cart one yoke from the teamster's unladen wheels, it fell to me to handle the ropes and goad. So long as I kept in the rear of another team all went well; but if I essayed to lead, my Yankee brogue was utterly unrecognized by the half-tamed creatures. Halting at noon beside a forsaken log-house, I amused myself with catching lizards, treetoads and ant-lions, while Fred left his dinner half-eaten to bag a flock of Carolina parrots, the first and only ones we met

in Florida. True to their reputation, curiosity to know what had happened to a fallen companion seemed to keep them lingering around till all were shot without the shooter hardly stirring from his first chosen position. There can be little doubt that this bird, once so abundant in all the Southern States, and even ranging into New York State, is fast becoming extinct east of the Mississippi River. After dinner, while waiting for our lazy teamsters to snooze, I still further amused myself with skinning a sandhill crane, in the midst of which operation rapid stinging sensations about the naked ankle, caused an investigation, only to reveal a centipede or scorpion amusing himself with my nervous system. The application of hartshorn to the half-dozen punctures reduced the swelling, and in two or three days I was no longer reminded of the insect that menaces with its head, but wounds with its tail.

The monotony of the afternoon drive was varied about four o'clock with the cry of "turkeys ahead." Fred and Tom undertook the task of providing us with fowl for supper, and with such success as to bring in a bird apiece. Just as we were congratulating ourselves on something better than hog and hominy, a party of six more, parents and children all told, overtook us and fastened themselves upon *our* party. The cracker's coach—the inevitable ox-cart—bore four of them, while two rode ponies. Taught by the experience of the morning, the dreams of Fred and myself vanished, and we resigned ourselves to the thought of little more than sniffing the perfumes of the savory repast. The larder of the latest comers proved as lean as that of the earlier, and when all had partaken sparingly of the supper, the teamster declared that such as had horses, including himself, must push on at midnight, and leave the rest on short allowance, to reach his home by sundown of the following day, as not more than a spoonful of hominy to each was left. On further consultation it was decided for all to start at light and make a few miles before breakfast. After a brief repast at the foot of a tree, our oxen were yoked and all fell into line. A wild-cat springing out of the path was soon overtaken by the dog, but instead of being held by the dog, it turned the scale and held the dog, till Tom came up and released its victim by a charge of buckshot. Skinning the cat at our next halt, and throwing the carcass into the low scrub, I was surprised to find both the Turkey Buzzard and the Caracara eagle gathering

around it, in large numbers, in less than twenty minutes, though when thrown away there was not a bird in sight.

Both in going out towards the Kissimmee and in returning, wherever the water had dried away upon the prairie, numerous hillocks of freshly-formed pellets of sand, five or six inches in height were observed. Digging beneath the hillocks would invariably discover a small cray-fish, that evidently maintained its home in the moist earth by keeping beneath the influence of drought.

As we neared the home of the Teamster, Tom whispered in my ear, "we are going to have a party at our house to-morrow night," and as he said it, I observed a smile upon his countenance for the first time since we had met.

Excursion No. 1 from our camping base on Ten Mile Creek proving fruitless, so far as seeing Lake Okechobee was concerned, and Fred being disinclined to spend any more time searching for it, I undertook the matter alone, and bargained with the teamster—whom we will hereafter call Mr. J.—to provide me with a mule, and guide me at the beginning of the week to the Indian village some forty miles distant, and reputed to be in the vicinity of the lake.

Our provisions being exhausted and one kind of shot, it was necessary for Fred to go to Fort Capron to replenish our larder and ammunition. We also hoped to receive letters, as we had heard nothing from home to this time. Tom's services were again secured, but this time as driver of a mule cart, which could, however, only reach Bell's grocery, a mile short of the Post Office grocery, where our ammunition was stored. Under the disappointment of no letters for either of us, Fred undertook to carry by a tangled foot-path to Bell's grocery two bags of shot, five pounds of coffee, and a handleless jug containing two quarts of sugar syrup for hominy, neither grocer having any sugar. A boat was at hand, but the boatman must have a dollar and a half for the mile of sailing; nor would he help carry the load on land for less. Being "Yankee" pluck against "Cracker" *generosity*, the former triumphed, but a kind Providence threw a man in his way soon after starting—probably one of the loungers about the grocery—who for fifty cents relieved Fred of a part of his load. This deposited in the cart, it started homewards, while Fred made



a detour of three miles to get at another grocery five pounds of hominy and his single barreled gun he had left there when first starting for the lake. In a little time the paper hominy-bag gave way, and the contents commenced marking his track. In this exigency he remembered the big pocket in his hunting coat extending over the whole back, and designed as a receptacle for game. Into this goes the remnant of the hominy and is saved. In swimming Five Mile Creek the jug of syrup rolled out of the cart and was left in the mud at the bottom. So all the delicacy we had for either coffee or hominy, we hadn't.

While Fred was gone I skinned a pair of coons, male and female, both secured at one shot. The male had marks of great age, and, judging from his mutilated ears, must have been a hard fighting character in his youth. One bone had also been broken square off, and no surgeon being at hand to reduce the fracture, it had healed with the two ends lapping, through contraction of the muscles.

As suggested by Tom, towards sundown of the day following our return I observed men, women and children gathering at the cabin, mostly on foot, but some on horseback and others in ox-carts. At length a man rode up of graver mien and with horse more richly caparisoned than any other I had seen. Soon Mr. J. brought him to my tent, and taking me aside, said, "This man is a justice of the peace, and has come sixty miles to marry Tom to my daughter to-night, but there is a hitch in the arrangement, as the last week's mail has failed to bring the license sent for. Now what do you advise, as the justice cannot wait two weeks for another mail, and my neighbors for ten miles around are all gathered to witness the ceremony?" As the malfeasance would be wholly on the part of the justice, inasmuch as should he perform his part with their consent, they would be legally married to all intent and purpose, it was finally decided that Mr. J. and Tom should give the justice a written obligation, with myself as witness, to send him the certificate as soon as possible, which document they both signed by making their mark, after I had assured them it was written correctly. Nothing further hindering, Tom and his bride took position on the platform connecting the two rooms of the log cabin, while the justice pronounced them, without any questioning or pledging, husband and wife. Tom had exchanged

his teaming suit for a similar one, only more cleanly, and his bride contented herself with plain calico without ornaments of any kind, but with shoes and stockings—the first time I had seen her wear any. After the ceremony, the bride's mother and grandmother stepped up and shook hands without kissing, and were followed by her father without coat or vest, shoes or stockings, but with shirt-sleeves rolled up to his elbows, and his pants to his knees. After a long pause, I considered it my turn to shake hands with them, though, with all my knowledge of their antecedents, and at how fearful a price Tom had gained his bride, I could hardly bring my mind to congratulate them upon their union. The ice broken, there was a rush for handshaking, after which Mr. J. brought out a fiddle with two strings and called for dancing. Unable to aid in this part of the festivity, I soon retired to my tent, though disturbed till daylight with the music and toe-tripping. There might have been some whiskey-drinking, but it was not apparent, nor did I see any one inebriated, though Mr. J.'s prolonged efforts to extract music from the two-stringed fiddle had evidently overtaxed his nervous system and somewhat disguised *him*. During the forenoon the guests were scattered about the premises, sleeping off the weariness of the night, and by sundown all had departed, even the guests from beyond the Kismimec. It was, however, discovered that many equipments had changed hands, either intentionally, on the principle that "exchange is no robbery," or in the confusion of a half-wakeful condition. My own premises were undisturbed except by the wandering hogs, whose long snouts thrust between my tent-coverings rooted me up, and interfered with my slumbers more than the squeaking of the fiddle.

While waiting for Mr. J. and Tom to sleep off the weariness of the wedding festivities, Fred and myself busied ourselves in preparing skins of such birds and animals as were vicinuous to the camp, such as turkey-buzzards, brown-headed nut-hatch, hawks, lizards and snakes. While skinning the coons a buzzard alighted on a branch within twenty feet and patiently watched the operation, expecting, no doubt, to feast upon the carcasses. His sauciness tempted my gun beyond endurance, and an off-hand shot quenched his appetite forever. Dropping into a mass of palmetto scrub, I requested Fred, who was cooking our supper, to bring him in, lest the hogs should appropriate him before I could

leave my work conveniently. Ever accommodating and respectful, he essayed to fulfil my request, but quickly returned, blurting out snappishly between the retchings of his stomach, "Go get the stinking thing yourself!"—the first and only impatient expression that fell from his lips in all our trip. It was *his* first experience of close proximity to the foul bird, while my childhood Virginia experience had made me familiar with its habits. Instantly suspecting the reason of his disgust, I forgave him in my heart his unintentional disrespect, and laughingly rallying him on the weakness of his stomach, picked up the bird myself and put it in a safe place from the hogs, notwithstanding the unsavoriness of the ejections from its nostrils.

The wily "Cracker," Mr. J., having by this time concluded he had found the goose that lays a golden egg, began to tell of heronries a few miles away in different directions that would furnish us all the variety of birds and eggs we could desire. To test his word, Fred went with him the second day after the wedding to the nearest one, Mr. J. on horseback and Fred afoot. Five miles, most of the distance through water from ankle to knee-deep, brought them to the heronry. It was a cypress-slue with tall trees, twenty-five feet or more in height to the lowest limbs, and thick undergrowth of bushes, ten to twenty feet in height. Most of the nests were in the trees, though some were in the tops of the bushes. By wading, in some places waist-deep, and climbing the bushes, Fred was able to secure twenty-seven eggs of the Snake-bird and White Heron. The bushes and nests were dripping with the excrements of the birds, giving Fred a second lesson in some of the unpleasant experiences of a naturalist. Stumbling over an unseen slimy log, he dropped his gun, and in recovering *that* completed the drenching of all his garments. On his way out he had shot a Snake-bird and a White Heron, and left them to secure on his return. Arriving at the spot, a few feathers only were found—a dozen or more buzzards on the trees contiguous explaining the absence of the bodies of the game. Nearing the camp, he secured for me a ground rattlesnake, a species about two feet in length and much smaller than the diamond, but more venomous. One morning, shaking up my bed of palmetto leaves, I noticed one of these reptiles crawling away from my couch. Wishing to secure one of the larger species, I offered

a ten-year-old son of a "Cracker" passing our camp a dollar if he would bring me one not less than four and a half feet in length. In less than fifteen minutes he returned, dragging at the end of a string fastened around his neck an adamantous five and a half feet in length and seven inches girth, with ten rattles. Between rattlesnakes on the land and moccasins in the water, it became us to be ever on the alert.

While making arrangements for the lake, Indian Charley, son of As-se-he-ho-lar or Osceola, the famous Seminole chieftain, happened to pass the camp. He wore a heavy turban on his head, a frock reaching half way to his knees, and moccasins on his feet. His skin had the genuine copper color of the wild Indian, and his hair hung over his shoulders in long, raven-black locks. He had a deer slung on his back, with a bundle of tanned deer-skins for trading. I learned from Mr. J. that the Indians first soak their deer-skins till the epidermis with the hair drops off, and then pound them in a wooden mortar with the brains of the deer to tan the skins and make them pliable. Charley acted very stupid, pretending that he could not understand us. Further acquaintance showed that this was only Indian caution before strangers, putting you off your guard till, by listening to your remarks in apparent indifference, they have made up their mind concerning you, and then relaxing or maintaining their stolidity, according to the impression you have given them,—a lesson in human nature their more enlightened white brethren might learn and practice with profit.

Having become disgusted with our high-top boots and brogans for swamp travel, we importuned Charley to make each of us a pair of moccasins. Showing him paper money, he signified he would make a pair for a dollar, but would discount fifty per cent. for silver. Having, fortunately, the morning I sailed from the North exchanged at a bank twenty-five dollars in paper currency for silver, paying nine per cent. for the difference, specie payment not having been resumed, I now had the best opportunity afforded me for speculation I had ever experienced,—a gain by the trader's own offer of forty-one per cent. ; and thus far I regard it as the *silver-letter* day of my life. The bargain struck, Charley unrolled his bundle of buckskins, measured my foot with a stick, and with only a knife and a bone awl, in half an hour made me a pair of

moccasins that did me excellent service for weeks afterward, and are now deposited in the museum of Brown University as a sample of utilitarianism respecting our pedal extremities it were well a more boastful civilization should progress to, instead of torturing nature with cramping shoes, in obedience to a slavish servility to fashion and for the benefit of corn doctors.

I learn that Mr. J. has the credit of causing the last Seminole war in 1857, by wantonly and purposely shooting an Indian squaw, that the remnant of the tribe left in the swamps around Lake Okechobee, after the removal of the greater part in 1843, might be more circumscribed in their already narrow limits guaranteed to them by a solemn treaty, and thus enable the constantly encroaching frontier settlements of outlaws from northern Florida and Georgia to enlarge their cattle ranches,—the main dependence of Cuba for beef. I met many "Crackers" who participated in that war of intended extermination of the tribe, and it was their universal testimony that the whites were, in every instance, the aggressors. One thing is certain: the word of the Indian and his general adherence to the golden rule were far more to be depended upon than the majority of the whites whom I met in that locality.

Daylight Monday morning found me mounted upon a mule, starting again for Lake Okechobee in company with Mr. J. Guided across the country by my pocket compass and map, and disregarding turkeys, deer and game of all kinds, about sundown we turned our creatures loose, kindled a fire, cooked our supper, and lay down to sleep at the foot of a tall pine. The night was clear but moonless, and I slept soundly despite the mosquitoes, till the unearthly hooting of a large owl right over my head awakened me. To raise my gun without raising myself and drop him at my feet, was the work of a moment, and to drop to sleep again was the work of another moment. In the morning I found the bird within three feet of me, and was severely reprovèd by my companion for not throwing it into the bushes when it fell, fearing it might have attracted the "varmint" to us. Within half a mile of our camp we struck the trail that led us in an hour to an Indian lodge—simply a roof-shelter of palmetto-leaves, supported by four posts, with the sides wholly exposed to the winds. A platform of rails but two feet high, covered with deer-skins, formed the couch. Outside upon the ground was a fire with sweet potatoes and a corn-

cake baking in the ashes. Upon a log near the fire sat a squaw nursing a papoose, while a boy and girl of ten or twelve, entirely naked, were swinging a younger child in a hammock. As we came in sight, the paterfamilias, known among the "Crackers" as Tommy Tiger, planted himself in front of the lodge, with folded arms, standing full six feet two, clothed only in a frock reaching half-way to the knees. To Mr. J.'s "Good Morning, Tommy," not a word of reply or movement of a muscle." "Yank, Okechobee, here night, you guide, silver," was uttered by Mr. J. partly by words, but more by signs. A shake of the head only in reply. "Where's Chief Tustenuggee?" A wave of the arm by Tommy signified he was way off hunting. I then broke in, "Me Yank, Okechobee, one day, silver," suiting my action to my word, by displaying a handful of the shining halves and quarters. His eyes sparkled, and turning upon his heels without a sign struck a bee-line for the woods. "He's gone for his pony," said the guide. Observing a child enter a swamp, we followed, and crossing a creek on narrow footlogs, came out upon a hummock of pine land, where we found half a dozen more lodges, and plenty of women and children, but no men. The women were grubbing the ground preparatory to planting corn. The children were amusing themselves with their bows and arrows.

These Indians to the number of about forty families are a remnant of the Seminoles left in the Everglades at the close of the war of 1857. They are not recognized by the Government and maintain their original habits of living by hunting and fishing in a tribal relation; electing and deposing at pleasure their chief, whose word is absolute. No missionary labor has been dispensed among them, nor do they seemingly need it more than the neighboring whites. Their singular custom of loading down the female children with glass beads—necklaces obtained originally from the Spaniards and passing down the generations as heir-looms, must have some physiological significance, which, in my ignorance of their language I could not discover. A single necklace is put on at birth and additions made from time to time, till I counted over a hundred around the neck of a maiden of eighteen or twenty, the whole weighing not less than twenty-five pounds. A very aged squaw tottered around beneath a similar burden, and from her erect form, I inferred the object of wearing them might be to develop and preserve physical symmetry.

On the border of the creek I found an outcrop of coral rock greatly worn and decayed, with north and south strike. This find strongly countenances the correctness of Mr. C. J. Maynard's conclusions respecting the geological "process of land-making" by which the peninsula of Florida has been formed. Simply premising that the theory requires there to have been in geologic ages past, a more or less extensive ridge of rocks along what is now the western coast, as a foundation for coral-building, I will quote at length from the "Sportsman," in which paper Mr. Maynard first published his views in 1874.

"Ages ago these breakers which roll upon this eastern sandy beach, dashed on the rocks of Western Florida, more than a hundred miles away. Then it was that the little polyp, living far down beneath the sea, began to abstract lime from the surrounding waters and build a line of coral reef, just like the one which now lies along the Florida Keys. When the coral rock had risen to the surface of the water the action of the waves continually cast sand and shells over it, gradually filling the space between it and the shore. These accumulations arose more rapidly immediately behind the reef and soon overtopped it, rising above the surface in a long ridge. This grew wider and wider, and finally became covered with vegetation, presenting the appearance of a veritable beach ridge like the one on which we stood.

"The waves with their ceaseless motion ground and beat millions of shells to pieces, just as they are now beating and grinding them. The wind swept the lighter fragments into the lagoon which was now formed beyond, while the waves during storms rushed over the ridge and carried with them the larger shells. The sand being heavier, settled down, and the shells gradually accumulated over it until the lagoon was filled and dry land was formed, which was soon covered with vegetable mold upon which grew the luxuriant vegetation of the South.

"Thus it was that a great level plain was formed, with enormous depressions, in which fresh water collected. These hollows then formed swamps, which overflowed, and the water striving to escape to the sea marked out the river beds. It can now be understood how it is that the foundation of Florida is composed of lime rock. This immense bed of loose fragments of shell became cemented together by pressure with the help of water, and now forms the underlying strata just below the surface of the soil.

"This in general is the plan of the formation of Florida. Two of these partly filled lagoons are now to be seen on the eastern coast: Indian River—which, as it has a supply of fresh water continually sweeping through it from the swamps at the north, will probably always remain much as it is at present; Mosquito lagoon—which, as the shelly beach on the western side indicates, is now slowly filling and before many seasons have passed will be solid land. The water of this lagoon is very salt. The tide ebbs and flows but a short distance from the inlet, which is shallow and narrow, while on account of constant evaporation, the waters of the southern end of the lagoon sometimes contain twenty-five per cent. more salt than that of the neighboring ocean. Where the beach ridge is narrow the coral reef can be seen just below the surface of the water. The beach ridge is twenty-five feet higher than the surface of the ocean; yet, during storms, the waves dash over the top."

According to this theory the St. John's flows in the latest formed lagoon west of the Indian River, while the southern terminus of the peninsula must once have been north of Lake Okechobee, and have been continued southerly by successive reefs curving to the southwest.

In about half an hour Indian Tommy returned bestride a pony without saddle or bridle. Girding on a blanket, with stirrups of deerskin and a bridle corresponding, and binding on his moccasins, with a few sweet potatoes tucked into the bosom of his frock, he mounted and started for the woods in a bridle-path without a sign of any kind indicating his intentions. We mounted and followed in true Indian file at a stiff trot for an hour, without a backward look from our guide. Coming to a creek bordered on either side for fifty feet with thick underbrush, he dismounted and sounded the quagmire with a large stick, till, finding a fording-place, he led his pony by the thong reins, across the slough. We followed his example, but when we emerged from the thicket, he was trotting at double speed, full quarter of a mile distant. At the end of another hour, he suddenly dismounted, hung all his horse equipments upon a branch, turned the pony loose, and sat down composedly to eating his potatoes. Imitating him we built a fire, boiled our coffee, broiled our venison, and at one o'clock signified that we were at his service. Immediately he struck into



a blind trail in the unburnt grass, that terminated in quarter of an hour in a cane-brake. Signifying to one of us to follow a few feet to the right of him, and to the other a few feet to the left, he plunged into the morass parting the cane with his hands. In half an hour the water was nearing my waist, when we came upon four canoes hollowed from logs. Tommy selected the best, and motioning to us to get in, with some difficulty we succeeded, lying close in the bottom. He then went still further into the cane, till lost to view, but soon returned with a long pole and a paddle. Bounding into the canoe like a cat, he poled us along for an hour, when we entered a cypress-swamp, with open water among the huge trunks, though greatly impeded by cypress-knees from beneath, and bramble growth from above. For once, his Indian keenness was at fault, and after fruitless efforts for an hour, to penetrate the cypress slough, we worked our way back to where we entered, when Tommy started off waist deep in the water, prospecting. When a hundred feet away a low chuckle reached our ears. "He has found it," exclaimed my companion, and speedily he appeared with an approximation to a smile upon his countenance, the first I had noticed. Poling the canoe through the cane and saw-grass to the spot, I noticed a twig broken half off, two feet above the water and bent to the left; also flags, a sure indication of a sluggish current or channel. Fifty feet further on a twig was broken similarly, but bent to the right. Though in a creek, no current was perceptible, and often a thick curtain of brambles had to be lifted by Tommy's pole while we dragged ourselves beneath. In other places logs impeded our track, which we sometimes crawled under, and at other times hauled the canoe over, Tommy, giant that he was, depressing the bow, or elevating the stern. After toiling another hour in forcing our way through the cypress and disturbing not a few "'gators, moc'sins and such like varmin," as my cracker companion called them, we found ourselves suddenly debouching on the lake, with only a water-horizon in front, and limitless banks on the right and left. The problem is solved—there *is* a Lake Okechobee, and even my cracker guide, who had been five years searching for it, is obliged to give up his doubts and confess that I had enabled him to find it. Before landing we paddled out from the shore for a quarter of a mile. Sounding with a pole, we found it eight feet deep, and were as-

sured by Tommy it was nowhere deeper than that. Its shallowness permits light winds to stir up the bottom; and hence its destitution of fish, the fine sand being troublesome to their gills. My first impulse, as I stepped from the canoe, was to climb the tallest tree and see if I could discover the boat or camp of the "explorer" and his party. Seeing nothing of them, I contented myself with cutting my name in the bark of a huge box tree, in hopes, if they had not already passed this point in their circumnavigation of the lake, they might find it, and thus Erwin know ere we met, how well I had fulfilled my promise to see the lake before leaving Florida. Two weeks later they passed the point, but not near enough to discover signs of occupation. It is now known as the result of *their* exploration, that "the lake is about forty-five miles in length, from north to south, and thirty in width from east to west near the center." With the exception of two small islands on the southwest border, it is an unbroken expanse of water, terminating at the south in "the Everglades, through which without creek or river, the accumulated drainage of thousands of square miles of territory slowly percolates by millions of channels with countless ramifications, to the ocean and the gulf." Convinced that the shores of the lake, where I examined it, were utterly barren of animated natural history, and warned by the low descending sun, I gave orders for our return.

Having gratified my curiosity as to the existence of the lake, I more carefully inspected the skirting cypress slough on my return, and was amazed at the gigantic ferns and flaming epiphytic air-plants. Overarching vines and Spanish moss festooned the trees, while variegated leaves of beautiful lilies tinted the waters. But hideous snakes and repulsive alligators alone represented the animal kingdom to enjoy these rare charms of the vegetable—leading me often to ask, "Why does the Creator so frequently display his selectest skill in places inaccessible to mortal man?"

Reached the hiding place of the canoes at sundown and the halting place at dusk to find our horses all right. It being too late to go further, we built our camp fire, and sharing our supply with Tommy, I lay down to sleep, with a known murderer and outlaw on one side and a wild Indian on the other, in a wilderness at least fifty miles distant from any semblance of civilization. It was impossible to prevent intrusive thoughts of suspicion that my

watch and silver might prove a stronger temptation than their honesty could bear—especially when I awoke about midnight and found Tommy stepping noiselessly near my head. Instinctively one hand grasped my pistol and the other searched for my hatchet, till I discovered his intentions were only to recruit the fire. To thwart the clouds of mosquitoes that settled down upon every exposed part of my body, and even pierced readily through my sail-cloth pants and blue flannel shirt, as soon as Tommy lay down I parted the fire and laid myself down between the two heaps, that the wind might blow the pine-knot smoke across my face. As a result from the gathering of the soot upon my hair and beard, I was, in the morning, far more of an Indian, in appearance than Tommy, to his great amusement—the second time I had seen anything like a relaxing of his facial muscles.

Observing numerous stumps of large trees, that had evidently been cut by a civilized axe, I learned from Tommy that we were encamped upon the site of General Taylor's great battle with the Indians in 1837, when he was most disastrously defeated. Tommy explained in his pantomimic way how the soldiers fled in their retreat, and also how the Indians scattered, in the final issue of the war, to the swamps we had just penetrated.

But where are our horses? Tommy climbed the tallest tree, but could see nothing of them. Descending, he took a circuit, till, discovering their tracks, he darted off in a tangent, returning in a couple of hours, driving them before him. Having Tommy to feed, we were on short allowance for breakfast, but on reaching Tommy's lodge at noon, he brought out sweet potatoes and corn-bread in abundance, with jerked venison, and, as a luxury, he drew into a broken gourd some honey from a bottle made of the skin of the leg of a deer, stripped off whole and plugged up at the ankle end with a wooden stopper. We all dipped our bread together into the gourd, with a good relish—so readily does real hunger do away with squeamishness. After lunching, I offered the promised silver. Tommy held his open palm towards me, but turned his face from me. I dropped into his palm one, two, three, four half-dollars, when he closed it, tucked the silver away in his frock, and started off, without any more of a farewell than of a welcome the day before.

For fifty years an Indian relic constructed of a dozen box-

tortoise shells, bound together by deer-skin thongs, each one partially filled with wild beans, had lain in a physician's office in Providence, R. I., with the tradition that it came from the Seminoles, though nothing more could be said about it when it was presented to the museum of Brown University. At my first sight of the Indian lodges, I was gratified to observe the same article suspended under the roof of each one. As Tommy turned to leave me, I signified my desire to purchase a pair of them. At first he flatly refused, but as I urged, he commenced a dialogue with his squaw and aged mother, which ended in his holding up one finger for one, and two for two, meaning a dollar for one, and two dollars for a pair. I readily took a pair, and then desired him to put them on, and show me how to use them. At that he straightened up to his full height of six feet two, folded his arms and looked down upon me with such a withering frown as completely cowed me. Mr. J. instantly grasped his pistol, so threatening was his scowl. But Tommy quickly recollected himself, pocketed the insult and contemptuously pointing to his wife with the exclamation, "Squaw dance," turned upon his heel and left me. I at once saw my mistake, and how grievously I had insulted him by intimating that he, a brave, should demean himself to put on an article which, I afterwards learned, was worn only by the squaws as a musical accompaniment to their green-corn dances. Going over to her, I held out a silver quarter, when she readily bound them below the knee, and gave me a specimen of a Seminole reel.

My return to Fred's camp was devoid of interest, except that my Cracker companion got out of tobacco from sharing with Tommy (who, in his turn, shared with all his picaninnies except the papoose in the hammock), and soon became very cross, often putting his horse into a gallop and getting far ahead of me, it being almost impossible for me with stick and spur to urge my mule out of a slow trot. The second day he became more insolent, and insisted finally upon breaking camp at 10 o'clock at night, to reach home at midnight, saying his horse would know the way home in the darkest night. Knowing what he might be if the lion within him was aroused, I carefully avoided irritating him, and let him have his own way. When about two miles from home, he wanted me to let him have my pistol to fire off, as a signal to his family that he was coming—pretending that he al-

ways did so when he returned home. Asking him why he did not use his own, he said, "mine spoke loudest." As I handed it to him with my left hand, I cocked my double barreled gun with my right, and fell back a little into the darkness. He fired two shots in quick succession, and said he would fire two more half a mile further on, and did so, and then returned me the pistol and somewhat relieved my anxiety. • Just upon that, a year-old colt belonging to him galloped up, and, though doing nothing out of the way, he commenced venting his spite upon it by filling the air with his curses. At length, determined to hurt something, he dismounted and commenced belaboring the colt with a large club, but in the darkness gave his own horse a thwack that sent him flying and landed his saddle-bags in the bushes. The faithful beast, however, returned at his call, and after a long search the saddle-bags were replaced, and we arrived at his cabin to find Fred all right in his tent, but greatly rejoiced at my return. I have no reason to think Mr. J. designed harm, but to this day his conduct is utterly unaccountable to me.

During my absence Fred tented alone, employing the first day in *household* matters, cleaning his gun, sharpening his hatchet and skinning-knives, shooting a couple of birds in the vicinity of the camp, trying his hand at baking bread in a borrowed Dutch oven, and retiring at sundown; but the wandering hogs so disturbed him he rose soon after midnight and built a rousing fire. This brought from the cabin a Mr. N., the eccentric character of the settlement, a squatter and bachelor, whose homestead, three miles distant in the woods, consisted of a mule cart, beneath which he slept in his blanket on the bare ground, and whose personal property comprised the one suit of clothes he wore and the mule I rode to the lake, with dilapidated saddle, bridle and saddle-bags. Lending a hand to the squatters occasionally, he earned a precarious subsistence, spending what little money he could get hold of for whiskey. Obeying the caution I had impressed upon me by Judge P., at my introduction to "Cracker" life, I carefully avoided inquiring into the antecedents of any one, but Mr. N. must have seen better days at some period in his life, for he would entertain us with Methodist songs from memory (as he could not read or write) by the hour together,—the only recognition of christianity I found in all this benighted region. Though at least three-score-

and-ten, he assured me he intended to marry ere long ; and, when I interposed the objection of his want of a suitable lodging place, he quickly replied, "Any woman who didn't love him enough to sleep with him under his cart, wasn't worthy of him." My more extended acquaintance with "Crackers" of the feminine gender convinced me he would not find much trouble in pairing himself, if he should seriously pop the question.

While I was absent a "Cracker" boy stimulated Fred's gastro-nomic propensities by the offer of some eggs, which luxury called to mind the sugar syrup in the bottom of Five Mile Creek. The temptation to try for it was too strong to resist ; so, putting all his provisions inside of Mr. J.'s fence for fear of the hogs, leaving both ends of the tent open for them to walk through, rolling up all the clothing with the carpet-bag knapsack containing our arsenic into a bundle and putting it on the table I had extemporized for skinning purposes, he took his gun and trudged to the creek, and was delighted to see the jug sitting bolt upright on the bottom, but too deep down to reach with arm or stick. Though the water was very cold, in a trice, stripping and diving for it, he was overjoyed to find the water had not leaked in to dilute it. And so the luxury we hadn't, we had. Securing a couple of herons, and this time firmly retaining hold of the coveted jug, he retraced his steps to the camp with beatific visions, which were destined to be dashed to the ground as he came in sight of it. The table lay flat and everything was scattered around, with the hogs making merry with *all* the women in the cabin three hundred feet distant had not saved, as they heard the table fall. Fortunately, both for ourselves and the hogs directly, and indirectly for our continuance on good terms with the "Crackers" in the settlement—for the hogs were common property—the women saved the arsenic before the creatures had penetrated to it. Having righted things and carefully potted two bones of a deer for soup the next morning, securing the cover beyond the possibility of a hog's snout reaching the meat, he lay down to sleep. By 4 o'clock in the morning the hogs routed him out, but the pot containing the soup meat was seemingly untouched. All preparations being made, the pot was opened, when, lo, one of the two bones was missing ! Though every necessary caution had been taken against the insertion of a hog's snout, none had been taken against a coon's snout

or a 'possum's paw. Spending his third day alone in skinning birds and contriving better arrangements for protection against the hogs and "*varmint*," he laid down to sleep at dark, only to be aroused by my return at midnight. Little sleep, however, had either of us, so annoying were the hogs, and we decided to quit that locality as speedily as possible.

Having accomplished the desideratum of the trip, in seeing the lake and disabusing naturalists of its pretensions as an elysium for them, we were all at sea as to future plans, for the second object of our trip was still in abeyance,—the securing of specimens of rare birds and their eggs, and a study of them in their native haunts. Our wily "Cracker," ever on the alert to make money out of us, honestly or dishonestly, suggested our camping for a few days at a "heronry" a day's tramp into the heart of Alpatikee Swamp, known only to himself and the Indians, but impenetrable, except by a boat, on account of the deep water and the cypress-knees. He also informed us that, three miles down the creek near which we were encamped, there was a flat-bottomed boat just adapted to our need, which the owner would sell at a reasonable price. So Tom was despatched with the oxen to bring it. Towards night he returned, saying it had lain upon the bank so long, drying in the sun, that he could thrust his hand between every plank. Suggesting to him that we would take it to pieces and re-nail and re-caulk it, I went back with him, and bringing it to the camp, we set about the operation. As there were neither sawn boards nor nails in all the settlement, we worked very carefully to save what we had. For caulking we used the lace fibre of the palmetto leaf besmeared with tar, which we tried out of the pine knots by smothering them in an oven made in the ground. When finished, we had a scow twelve feet in length, four feet wide, turned up two feet at each end, with a gunwale of eight inches,—the frail bark that subsequent experience proved was to save us many times from the jaws of alligators and a watery grave. Having bargained with Mr. J. to take us with his ox-team to the heronry, and return for us in ten days, at so much a day, we had our luggage all ready for him to load into the scow soon after daylight, and requested him to drive about a hundred yards to our camp for it. As the heronry was beyond his house from the camp, he refused to come or even to lend us the least assist-

ance in getting our heavy packs to the team, saying "he bargained to start from his house." As before suggested, we knew it was well not to arouse the tiger in him, and so we toted them ourselves to the scow, he grumbling all the time that we were delaying him. About 9 o'clock we got off, but were ourselves delayed by our teamster's insisting upon a long tarry at each Cracker's hut we passed within the first five miles. By careful balancing of our load, we managed to ford almost to swimming Ten Mile Creek, and keep our powder dry, and soon after entered the Flats, showing only a water-horizon with an occasional island a few feet in diameter, on which from one to half a dozen tall pines were growing, with a thick growth of underbrush,—excellent rendezvous for panthers, wild-cats, 'possums and land snakes, wild turkey roosting in the trees. To wade knee-deep was the work of the day, carefully avoiding the dreaded moccasin, which, lurking in the tussocks of grass, "strike their envenomed fangs deep into the leg ere the traveller is aware of their presence." Plodding on wearily after the cart, as the safer position through the fright to the snakes occasioned by the paddling of the oxen, we came to a grassy plain a mile in width, from which the drying-up waters had receded, but revealing midway across it a creek near waist-deep with perpendicular sides. But my spade soon changed their steepness to a slope, and the faithful oxen, accustomed to rushing through a stream, landed all safe on the other side. Two or three such, but with sloping banks, we met in the course of the day, and one altogether too deep to wade conveniently; but to my request that we ride over, our teamster on the cart only replied by pouring out a volley of oaths, and urging the cattle across before we could come up with him. Thus alternating between strips of marsh and wide wastes of water, we at length discerned on the horizon a cypress-clump towering up like a "blue mountain." "That is the heronry," exclaimed our guide, "but there is no camping place nearer than this-island clump of palmettos near by." "But how far is the heronry from here?" "Perhaps four miles." "And do you expect us to wade this long distance twice a day for ten days and carry our game?" "Certainly." "Then take us right back to your house." After much persuasion he was induced to go on and run the risk of finding a nearer camping island. At length we found one less than fifty feet across



with considerable dead wood upon it, which our teamster said was not over a mile distant from the heronry, and was absolutely the nearest spot of dry land to it. Careful observation afterwards proved it to be not less than two miles. Cutting a path through the dense palmetto scrub bordering the island, we unloaded our traps from the scow, and left Fred to put things to rights for a ten days' camp-keeping, with the caution to be careful about setting the dry leaves afire, while the teamster and myself hastened on to launch the scow near the heronry. This effected, we noticed a fine camping island not more than a quarter of a mile distant; but it was too late, as all our luggage was two miles back. Nearing the camp on our return, Fred was seen repeatedly hurrying out into the water and back again, as though in trouble. It seems, notwithstanding our precaution, the fire had got the upper hand of him and was spreading, and he was lugging the powder and provisions out of the way of danger to an extemporized platform of sticks he had constructed in the water. Further examination proved the soil to be peaty, and suggested the danger of subterranean combustion, and such a possible thinning of the crust as to refuse to bear our weight some night, with the result of tumbling us, powder and all, into a mass of smouldering embers. To avoid this, we encircled our hearth with a trench and daily supplied it plentifully with water. To obtain filtered water for culinary purposes, we dug a shallow well a few feet within the margin of the island on the opposite side from our entrance, which soon filled with water percolating through the peaty soil. This, strained from the insects and small lizards continually tumbling into the well, served our purpose satisfactorily. Having thoroughly beaten the ground within and around our tent, to frighten away any ground rattlesnakes, scorpions and such like vermin as may have been lurking beneath the leaves, we commended ourselves to the care of Him who never slumbers nor sleeps, and lay down to rest at dusk. Excessive fatigue quickly invited sleep, but, the nights being moonless, for how long time we were unconscious I cannot say, when we were awakened by such deep bellows within a few feet as made me think at first some bulls of the cattle herds ranging all over the country had come in to camp near us. It was our first experience of the full-toned bellowing of alligators so near us, and it was a question whether our savory

viands of our evening repast might not be attracting them to our limited quarters. The thought was not pleasant, nor made less so by the sudden chiming in of the most horrible throttling sounds that ever grated upon human ear. I have not been unaccustomed from my youth to the death-rattle of the dying bedside, or the gasping groans of the earlier slaughter-houses; but in this medley of sounds that filled our ears, there was a perfect nondescript anomaly to me. Later experience leads me to suppose it was the dragging under of a large bird, perhaps the Water Ibis, by an alligator, as there was much splashing of water commingled with the shrieks and gurglings. But tired nature would assert herself, though only to be disturbed again by the distinct, but stealthy, tread of some animal close to our canvas. Is it a panther, is it a wild-cat, is it a coon, is it a possum, we whispered to each other. At length it approached my head and tapped the canvas within six inches of my face with its paw. I tapped back, when it bounded away, but with so light a bound that I was convinced it was not larger than a wild-cat or a coon, and felt no further alarm. Waking at daylight, we found abundant tracks of a wild-cat in the soft mud on the margin of our island and a flock of turkey-buzzards roosting directly over our heads, both indications of marauders warning us to put our things in order for safety before starting for the heronry.

Strapping on my tin knapsack containing our lunch, with gun in left hand and a palmetto stick seven feet long in right, with which to slap the water to frighten away the moccasins, and in our high-topped boots, we started, Fred carrying his gun, two tin pans and a tin cup, and a board for the purpose of making a seat across the top of our scow. We had hardly left the camp when the water poured into our knee-top boots, adding greatly to the weight we had to carry. Frequently my slapping the water would scare up a moccasin, which, "striking an attitude" for striking, would await our nearer approach with threatening fangs. Disabled by a blow of the stick, I was on the alert for another. Carefully taking our bearings that we might not get lost on our return, we came in sight of the gunwale of our scow just peeping above the water, it having sunk during the night. Cautiously approaching it, lest it might shelter underneath the dreaded reptile, I aided Fred into it to bail it out, while I proceeded to cut away

the marginal underbrush and make a path for pushing the scow into deep water. On starting, I had forgotten to take my stick, in my enthusiasm at the sight of the flocks of Spoonbills and Herons flying over the swamp; but ere I had taken ten steps, pausing in the water half knee-deep to watch their movements, I looked down and saw just beneath the surface the largest moccasin, I had hitherto seen, crawling between my legs. Instantly becoming motionless and telling Fred to keep quiet, I watched it "drag its slow length along," till its tail was a foot to the rear of me, and then showed it to Fred, whose blanched countenance would hardly permit him to exclaim, "Are you bitten?" I think I could sketch the markings on that snake's back with accuracy to-day, ten years after the occurrence, for I am sure I *seemed* to have ample time to examine them before the end of that tail showed itself.

Anticipating some trouble with the scow, for some of the boards I used in repairing it were not straight-edged, I had prepared myself with palmetto lace, and with my hatchet and knife re-caulked it, so that, should we bail it every few minutes we deemed it might be safe, and so pushed it through my path into deep water.

Now for the results of all our toil, expense and danger, and, thanks to a kind providence, they are speedily realized. Hardly afloat and a roseate spoonbill rose from its nest and perched beside it. Fred shot her while I poled the scow in all haste, as, the moment it struck the water, watchful alligators made for it on every side. We triumphed and secured it, and then Fred climbed to the nest amid the filthy branches while I kept the scow immediately under him, lest, falling from a dead limb into the water, he should himself be gobbled up by the alligators, who were watching the operation to the number of at least half a dozen. Three eggs were secured and identified. Bailing out our frail scow, I pushed it among the cypress knees, both excited to the highest pitch, as the birds kept rising from their nests, and, circling in the gleaming sunlight displayed their roseate hues to the best advantage. Soon another falls a victim to Fred's unerring aim, but alas, drops right into an alligator's mouth, who goes to the bottom with it in a trice. "Fred, lay low and I'll have that bird yet." "Nonsense, it's down the alligator's maw by this time." "We'll see," I replied, and pushing the scow over the spot of

engulfment, I could plainly see about six feet deep the pink hues of the spoonbill as it was held down by the alligator. Two or three thrusts of my pole so astonished the brute that he let go the bird, and it now graces the Museum of Brown University. Beside the spoonbills, there were by the hundreds, the different species of Egrets, Herons and Ibises. Having identified the eggs of the different nests by carefully noting what birds flew from them, and secured about fifty in all, beside as many birds as we thought we could skin before dark, we left our scow in the marsh outside and returned to camp carrying our load of about fifty pounds each, wading every step of the two miles with our boots full of water.

The next day being Sunday was spent in camp, cooking and wishing we might hear from home, as no letter had yet reached us. About two o'clock Mr. J. rode into camp, horseback, with letters for both of us, and saying he had a good chance to trade with the Indians if he had silver. So I accommodated him with \$15 and engaged him to come for us in nine days. Wandering to the further side of our fifty foot island for meditation, the thought suddenly struck me, what should either of us do if the other should perchance be killed? Until that moment such a possibility had not occurred to me, and I felt the cold shudder creeping over me, till I had worked out a plan that seemed feasible for preserving the remains in such an exigency. My plan was to sew up the body in our stout tent-cloth and my india-rubber blanket, and suspending it in a tree, the survivor find his way back to Mr. J.'s as best he might. In case of severe indisposition or maiming only, the problem was less easily solved, as the indisposed or injured could not be left alone. Considering all the risks I began to regret there was not a third member of the party, and I resolved then and there that I would run no such risk again.

On our third return to the cypress-slue, while Fred was bailing out the scow, I was attracted towards the margin in an effort to get within gunshot of a spoonbill circling over head. Was it indirect vision, or was it God's overruling providence that caused me as I raised my gun to fire, to look down instead of up, to see that I was within a gun's length of the snout of a ten-foot alligator half concealed in the water, but whose jaws were slowly opening to close about my limbs with a snap defying any mechanical

motion for quickness. To pour the contents of three chambers of buck-shot into his side just back of the fore-leg was the work of a moment. As he rolled over on his side we left him for dead, but returning to the spot three hours later he was gone.

We often found on the same tree eight or ten different kinds of nests, and observed that no nest was ever left vacant when undisturbed—one mate instantly taking the place of the other—as a regular system of robbery was constantly carried on between the rapacious hawks and crows, and the inoffensive herons. The slue was not very extensive, and after robbing the lower nests from ten to twenty feet in height and shooting the owners, we turned our attention to those nests from thirty to forty feet in height. On the fourth day Fred's shoulder became so lame from climbing he could hardly raise his arm and was forced to exchange work with me. Unfortunately we had no climbing irons, but fastening my claw-hatchet securely to my wrist and carefully testing the strength of every limb with a pull upon it before trusting my weight to it, I succeeded in mounting higher than I had ever done on trees, since the venturesome period of childhood. It was not a pleasant sight in my elevated position to see a dozen heads of alligators with pop-out eyes watching all my movements, and I knew that a treacherous branch might furnish them with a feast. Merely throwing down a stick would start them out of their lurking places, and bring into display their activity in the water, as well as their flexibility in winding in and out among the half concealed cypress-knees. The climber let the eggs and young birds down by a string in a handkerchief to the one remaining in the scow.

One of the Crackers in the settlement happening to be at Fort Capron when the semi-weekly mail arrived by sailboat from Jacksonville, he undertook to bring our second batch of letters to us with a package of my photos for which I gave a sitting the morning before I sailed from the north. But after searching for us two days he gave it up, and delivered the letters to Mr. J. to bring to us when he should send for us. Another Cracker learning that we had taken a scow to the heronry laid in with Mr. J. to direct him to it that he might avail himself of our means of navigating the slue to secure Egret plumes, which were in great demand for ladies' bonnets. When half way back to our camp on the fifth

day, we found him wading towards us. Joyfully welcoming him he returned to our camp, but as our tent was hardly large enough for Fred and myself, he slept outside rolled up in his blankets.

We frequently saw deer feeding in the open water-prairie, but as there was no cover for still hunting were unable to secure any.

Our constant firing had either killed off or frightened away the more timid spoonbills, so that Fred and the Cracker decided to take night and morning rations and spend the sixth night in the heronry to secure Egrets as they should come in at night from their feeding grounds or go forth in the morning—thus leaving me alone at the camp for that night. It was a new experience for me, although I had become accustomed to our nightly serenade medley of alligator bellowing, wild cat yawling, frog peeping, turkey gobbling, heron screaming, owl hooting and every other kind of unearthly sound pertaining to a wilderness swamp. The death rattlings of alligator or wild cat victims were frequently repeated on every side of me, and about midnight I was aroused by a second visit from our prowler of the first night. Again he tapped the canvass over my head as though clawing it, and bounded away with a heavy tread as I tapped back. Determined to identify the creature and, if possible, secure it for the Museum, I hastily lit my dark lantern, and lifting the side of my tent saw a little way off in the darkness two eyes gleaming upon me. Fearing to shoot my gun lest I should alarm my companions two miles distant, I fired my pistol at the eyes, with only the effect of eliciting a yell and a bound into the thicket. I was soon asleep again, not waking till long after sunrise. Fred and the Cracker returned towards night well laden with birds and plumes. Our provisions growing short we sent the Cracker into the settlement on the morning of the ninth day to hasten Mr. J.'s coming for us, as we had only flour enough left for one meal, nine eggs and a little coffee. Our spoonbill carcasses being all gone, we were forced to eke out our larder with white ibises. About noon the next day Tom arrived with the team, and after loading on to the axles the scow, we filled it with our luggage and started for civilization, such as it was. While on the island Fred was stung twice by scorpions, but our bottle of hartshorn brought quick relief. About dark some of Tom's family met him and they held a long consultation apart from us. As yet Tom had no reason to suppose I

knew anything about his being one of the murderers of Mr. Lang, but I saw from their countenances there was trouble brewing for them. When he returned to the team, I put on as cheerful a countenance as possible and commenced joking him, but he had no heart for my jesting, and I left him to his forebodings which were not unfounded, as the sequel will show.

Once more encamped on the old spot, we hoped, as we bunked for the night, the thievish hogs had forgotten us during our ten days' absence, but were wofully mistaken, as our frequent alternations of "shoo, shoo," and snatches only of dozing without real sleep proved. While breakfasting we were planning how to provide the grub necessary for carrying out a plan proposed by our Cracker visitor at the rookery for the next ten days, to the effect that we should proceed to a locality on the coast called Fort Pierce, four miles south of Fort Capron, where he had a boat, and camping there let him supply us with shore birds and fish in such numbers that we would be kept skinning and preserving all the time till we were ready to say "halt." This plan would cut us loose from Mr. J., who, subsequent experience showed, was not quite ready to let the goose that was laying the golden egg for him, fly away. So he and our new parasite, whom we will hereafter call Jim, came to our camp with many protestations of interest in our success, and proposed a postponement of the ten days' shore hunting and fishing for a ten days' trip, more or less, to another rookery two days distant, much larger than the one we had just left, and bordered by a pine hummock affording good camping ground immediately upon its shore. As it was yet early in the season for gathering some kinds of eggs, we snapped at the bait and sending off Tom ten miles to Fort Capron for replenishing our larder, spent the day in recaulking our scow, and packing the material we had left to dry in the loft of Mr. J.'s log stable. Vermin of some kind, despite the arsenic, had ruined my rattlesnake's skin, leaving me only the head and rattles. The mammal and bird skins were on the eve of moulding from the excessive dampness of the nights, and it was becoming a serious question whether we had not better get out of so swampy a region, to save what we had already secured at so great an expense of fatigue and money. To leave a cherished plan unaccomplished had not been the experience of my life of nearly three-score years, and I also felt some

responsibility in reference to introducing my young companion of less than a score to such an unfortunate future. After another sleepless night through the unwelcome visitations of our porcine tormentors, we repacked the scow placed upon the ox-team axles, and bade a final adieu to the settlement on ten-mile creek, with no regret, though in Mrs. J. we had found a true-hearted woman, who, alone of all we had met in the settlement, had manifested toward us the least spark of unselfishness.

In the outgoing of this trip, Mr. J.'s little son of ten years accompanied us, and enlivened the monotony of the tramp by his cheerful and unsophisticated nature, often plying me with questions concerning Yankeeland that made me grieve to think so bright a lad was being raised under such outlaw influences. An incidental remark, as we were fording a deep stream, whose quicksand bottom threatened to sink oxen and load out of sight, that in my country I had often driven oxen with a load of wood across a pond without sinking an inch, so taxed his credulity that he called upon my companion for confirmation of the statement. He had never seen a flake of snow or a film of ice, and no kind of illustration at our command could make him comprehend the fact. Dressed only in shirt and trousers, he scrambled around in the briars and saw-grass with naked feet as fearless of harm as though rattlesnakes and moccasins were as unknown in that region as snow and ice.

Camping soon after dark, we were too tired to unload our tent, and each chose his own place and lay down upon a bed of palmetto leaves and went to sleep counting the stars. Our little "cheerfulness" went searching in the dark for water, and just on the brink of a pool felt a ground rattlesnake wriggling about his naked ankles. Nimbly jumping aside, he captured the reptile and brought it to me as a trophy. At early dawn, we were off, and soon after sunrise crossed fresh tracks of deer, and not much further a panther's tracks. The panther should be hunted only with dogs, that his attention may be verted from the hunter while he is drawing sufficiently near to make sure of a deadly aim. In the course of the day we arrived at the rookery, and for once realized all the expectations raised by our Cracker guides. It was a cypress-slue of ten or twelve acres, with the exception of the end nearest us of about two acres of clear water, the whole encircled with a margin of dense undergrowth twenty-five or thirty



feet in thickness. So matted was the marginal growth it was impervious to the gaze beyond eight or ten feet, but on climbing a tall tree and looking over the underbrush, the clear water furnished to the sight a unique aquarium that no other State than Florida, I imagine, can furnish. I counted one hundred alligators, from three to twelve feet in length, leisurely swimming in all directions in the two-acre space, and ceased counting. Some were dragging long rushes in their mouths across the water, evidently to construct their nests, which are built on the margin above the water. The alligator lays from fifty to seventy eggs in alternate layers of reeds and eggs, and then leaves the mass of rubbish to putrefy and heat the eggs for incubation. Instinct brings the mother to the spot at the right time to tear open the pile and release the chicks on their first peeping.

Selecting a place for our camp just far enough from the swampy undergrowth to feel safe from the visits of alligators, in two hours we had a path cut through the undergrowth with a corduroy bottom laid, along which to push our scow for launching in the clear water. Mr. J. and his son returning with the team, this time we had with us Jim, an experienced hunter and boatman. Our experience in the first rookery led us to provide a boat-hook for this, beside poles and paddles. Our boat launched, we essayed to cross the clear water to the cypress-slue, above which we could see hundreds of Spoonbills, White Ibises and Egrets sailing, while others were diving in and out among the branches. So far as Crackers or Indians knew, we were likewise the first ever to launch a boat of any kind upon these waters, as well as at the first rookery. To the alligators, our invasion of their hitherto undisturbed domain must have been something akin to the astonishment of the natives when the vessels of Columbus hove in sight. Fearless, they swam up to the gunwale as to a floating log, and but for the thumping of their snouts with our poles, they would evidently have boarded us and taken possession of our frail batteaux. A few charges of shot so educated them, however, that on the second or third day they were ready to give us a wide berth as we issued among them. As we boated among the cypress-knees, they were still more numerous and audacious, so that we found it almost impossible to secure a single bird we had shot, a half-dozen at a time springing from their lurking-places the moment the bird touched

the water. Another set of nest-robbers than ourselves we found in the slue. The fish-crows by the hundreds were perched near the nests of the curlews and herons, just out of the reach of their long necks ; but the moment a bird left the nest, either to exchange places with its mate or because frightened by the crack of our guns, these crows, so intent upon their plunder as to be themselves unterrified, would dart upon a nest, and, if the egg was small enough, fly away with it in its bill, or if large, pierce it with its bill and fly off with the contents dripping away through the air. Forced thus to change our tactics, either to secure birds or eggs, we made it a rule each morning to first shoot a number of crows as they flew out and in, and by occasionally getting ahead of the alligators secure a portion of them. Placing these upon the slanting bow of the scow, if our shot dropped a Spoonbill or other bird, we would throw a dead crow in front of the nearest alligator making for our game, and thus manage, by giving away sometimes two or three crows, to secure one Spoonbill.

In crossing the open water on our camp-ward trips, as we came out of the slue, our guide Jim was very expert in often hitching the boat-hook over the shoulder of a huge alligator headed the right way, and making him in his fright drag us across the pond, till, nearing the shore, he would let go by thrusting the hook forward and then, giving our steed a punch in the side, dismiss him. In a few days we had secured all the Spoonbills, Egrets, Ibises and Snake-birds and their eggs we could well care for, and began to think of leaving the interesting place. Our provisions, too, were giving out, so I told Jim he must take our breech-loading rifle and go out and get us some venison hams. In about fifteen minutes after leaving us, we heard three shots in quick succession, and in a few moments more he came in with the request that we go out and help him bring in the hams. Repairing to the spot, we found a buck and a doe lying as they fell, about ten feet apart, the third, a doe, running off with a broken shoulder, but found the next day a few hundred feet away, dead. Securing our hams, and a portion of the liver of each, we had jerked venison for days to come. In one of the livers I found the parasite fluke, always to be searched for in the hepatic system of herbivorous animals.

Towards night of the sixth day Tom appeared with the oxen

and axles. Quickly converting our scow into a wagon-body, we prepared to bid farewell to cypress-slues and 'gator swamps, well pleased with our experience in seeing wild beasts and birds in their wild haunts. A day's tramping across pine hummocks and wallowing through intervening sloughs, brought us out upon an old army trail leading from Fort Capron on the Atlantic coast to Fort Bassinger on the Kissimmee. Following this with the forests on fire on both sides and trees falling across it, which had to be cut away, we camped at midnight for four hours by simply halting and lying down on the ground and sleeping as best we might. Resuming our march by earliest dawn, we soon found our way impeded by thick undergrowth and crosswise logs, which had to be cut away for the team. The last six miles being across a sandy hummock, with the thermometer at 100°, for six hours man and beast suffered exceedingly from thirst, and I began to long for the knee-deep morass, as more desirable. Towards night we reached Ft. Capron, and as I drew near was espied by Judge P., who had so kindly warned me, as I was about to leave for Okechobee, of the danger of trusting myself to the outlaws, who alone inhabited the region beside Indians. The instant he recognized me he rushed out of his house and clasped me around the neck, declaring he was never before so relieved in his mind, for he had about concluded his worst fears for our welfare had been realized.

At Judge P.'s I found Doct. P. and Erwin who had returned but the day before from their circumnavigation of the lake, having had a very sorry and to Erwin at least a very unprofitable time, for he had suffered most of the time from chills and fever which had now assumed a bilious form, and had so reduced his strength that he was unable to leave his bed. At first sight of him, I saw that, if I would take him home alive, I must change my rôle and turn nurse. Therefore I chose a camping-place not far away on the left bank of a stream about one-eighth of a mile above its débouché into Indian River. Just across the stream a stalwart negro by the name of Trott had recently "squatted," having a reputed lawful wife and a concubine, whose incessant quarreling made day discordant and night hideous except when the lord of the harem interfered and for the time turned one or the other out of the one-room shanty, as his fancy dictated. He was a native of the West Indies and had served on a man-of-war in varied ca-

capacity, till he had acquired more or less skill as a navigator. His strength was fully equal to that of two ordinary men, and if provoked would have been a dangerous man to deal with. As soon as possible I sent by boat for a hermit doctor across the Indian River, whose prescriptions dispelled the bilious tendency and gave me encouragement that in eight or ten days I might commence my homeward journey. Subsequent acquaintance with this physician revealed a singular history. Originally from Vermont, where he had long time practiced medicine, he acted as Surgeon during the war in a western regiment, but instead of returning to his home at the close of the war, drifted to this frontier land, and doubtless under an assumed name commenced a hermit's life on the sandy island nearly opposite Fort Capron, whiling away his time in fishing and coralling green turtles for the Savannah market. At this time he had coralled about fifty, weighing from forty to a hundred and twenty-five pounds. I bought of him the largest as a specimen for Brown University Museum. Two months later, he embarked on a sloop commanded by the negro, to take his turtles to Savannah, and was wrecked and drowned on the coast near Fernandina.\*

Our camping-place for the week proved beset with mosquitoes and fleas beyond anything we had experienced in the wilderness, utterly banishing sleep till after midnight, and sheer exhaustion compelled it. We could in a measure relieve ourselves from the mosquitoes by filling our little tent, as we lay down, with the dense smoke of fat pine knots. But, for the fleas there was no relief, often observing them to jump from our blankets in swarms as we hung them out to dry in the morning. A second trip would suggest a bountiful supply of oil of pennyroyal with which to perfume our garments, and which is said to be flea-expelling. At this stage of our trip we began to suffer from the stinging bites of the black gnats, an insect so small as hardly to be detected with the naked eye, but whose bite sends a thrill through the nervous system altogether disproportionate to its size. To this annoyance, unlike

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\* Schooner Rover, for Savannah, ran ashore off Doboy on the 9th inst., and went to pieces in fifteen minutes. Capt. Trott, wife and child (colored), Dr. Garfield, a passenger, and two colored men got into the boat which was swamped and all drowned except the captain, who returned to the wreck, where two other passengers and the balance of the crew remained. They floated on a raft to St. Catherine's Island, where they were taken off by steamer Carrie and brought to Savannah, Saturday morning. They were four days without food.

that of the fleas if one is provided with essence of pennyroyal, there is no remedy.

A heavy rain for three days and nights kept us under shelter most of the time, blowing the great quantity of eggs we had brought from the "cypress-slues"—our boatman Jim meanwhile making a fish-net of stout twine to use for seining the carp and small fish that abounded in the stream near whose mouth we were encamped. When finished we set it a little way up the creek, expecting in the morning to find a variety enclosed in its meshes. But instead, an alligator, or perhaps an otter, swam through it and tore it to shreds, thus in one moment ruining our boatman's work of two days.

The chuck-wills-widow, the analogue of our northern whip-poor-will, enlivened the nights with its plaintive note. To obtain one, as they are utterly secluded during the day, Jim fastened my dark lantern to the top of his head and going towards the sound, soon detected the bird in the cimmerian darkness, by the shine of its eyes, and secured it, though badly mutilated by the shot, as he was unable to judge of his distance from it. As soon as the norther of three days had blown out, Fred spent a day across the Indian River shooting terns, skimmers and oyster-catchers, which rose from the water in flocks of thousands, while I prepared my large turtle for preservation, poisoning the carcass and salting the meat for our larder. The following day, I hired the stalwart negro to accompany Jim and myself in a large boat to the Indian River Inlet, hoping to secure a saw-fish. These fish come in from the ocean through the inlet to prey upon the schools of fish that abound in Indian River. Swimming close to the bottom, when they perceive a school above, they quickly elevate their toothed upper jaw and whirling it about in the school, mangle and kill many to be eaten at their leisure. Our boat being provided with a coil of rope about a hundred feet in length, attached to a harpoon, we paddled gently where the water was about five feet deep, till discerning our game on the bottom, about twelve feet in length, Jim drove the harpoon completely through its body. Instantly the fish started for the ocean through the inlet, drawing out the line over the gunwale so rapidly as to make it smoke. The line having been made fast to the bow-post, when the end was reached, boat and all followed for half a mile with a velocity so great that

I quickly drew my hatchet from my belt and stood ready to cut the rope, if the bow gave indications of going under as the fish went into deeper water. At length he was wearied with the exertion, and slacked up, when we began to play the creature, till worrying him on to a shoal place, I had a fine exhibition of the way he gyrates his saw when mutilating his prey. At length seizing a favorable moment as his head was raised out of the water, I planted a rifle-ball just midway between the eyes, when a quiver ran through his frame and he was dead. None judged him to weigh less than 800 pounds. Towing him across the river to our camp, it was the work of an entire day to skin and pack the specimen for transportation.

While at this camp one of the better class of citizens privately interviewed me to learn what *I* might have learned during my forty days of intimacy with the murderers of Mr. Lang, saying, he had in his pocket a warrant received by the last mail from the Governor of the State for the arrest of Mr. J. and Tom and a neighbor of theirs, who were understood to be the guilty parties; and suggested that, if I would leave interrogatories with a Notary Public before going out of the State, it might further the ends of justice. Replying, that I had carefully avoided any allusion to the murder myself, yet Mr. J., in our long tramps alone, had seemed to find relief in freeing his mind to me of his own accord, and had revealed enough to satisfy me who were the guilty parties, yet I could not betray confidence unless subpoenaed from Massachusetts as a hearsay witness. I have learned from newspapers that soon after I left the region a determined sheriff went into the settlement with a posse, and shot Mr. J. dead in his tracks while resisting arrest, but brought Tom to trial, who was, for the want of positive evidence, convicted only of manslaughter, and died within a year in the State prison.

In nine days Erwin was strong enough to be conveyed to a couch prepared for him in a small sail-boat, and we started northward. It was our intention to start by 1 o'clock at the latest, and were ourselves all ready, but Jim's laziness delayed us till 5. Had we not had a superabundance of experience already in the thriftlessness of the Crackers, we should have gone crazy at the needless delay. The greatest boasters of what they can do, but the poorest performers of what they promise, they are unique in

their characteristics, and to the enterprising Yankee a marvel of incongruities. When the Anthropologist has satisfactorily traced the Hottentot and the North American Indian to their origin, he may turn his attention to the origin of the Florida Cracker and he will find a much harder problem to solve. I have been a far more patient man since my trip to Florida than before, two months' experience in Crackerdom doing more for me in the cultivation of that grace than a half century previously.

With a favoring breeze we made *twelve* miles by 10 o'clock, and camped on the west shore of Indian River on the sand, making Erwin as soft a couch of leaves as possible beneath our mosquito-bars, while Fred and myself lay down by the fire. By 3 o'clock the mosquitoes and sand-fleas got the mastery of us and banished all sleep thereafter. For fresh water we dug a hole about ten feet from the shore, which soon filled with water percolating the sand, the cohesive attraction of the sand retaining the salt. Breakfasting upon broiled turtle steak, we reached a Brown Pelican rookery on an island of eight or ten acres in extent. Our large boat grounding about a mile distant, we all went overboard but Erwin and pushed it for half a mile. Then anchoring and pushing our small row-boat a quarter of a mile further, we left it and waded as much more, to behold the greatest curiosity of the kind I had ever dreamed of. The island was mostly covered with Mangrove trees, a kind of Banyan, whose limbs turn down from the height of eighteen or twenty feet and take root, thus forming an uninterrupted canopy over a large part of the island. An acre, more or less, was covered with a clump of taller trees, in which Blue Herons were nesting. Hoping these might prove to be *Wurde-mann*, I first gave my attention to them, but through the failure of Fred's gun to fire, as the bird rose from its nest, lost my chance, to my great disappointment. Having secured the eggs, we turned towards the pelicans. The Mangrove is a slowly decaying tree, and, though at some time this grove must have been thrifty—probably before the pelicans took possession of it—now every tree was barren of leaves and life. As we drew near, every branch seemed covered with nests as closely as they could be packed,—indeed, so near oftentimes that a bird sitting on its own could easily dip its bill into the nest of its neighbor. On one tree, not twenty feet high or more than six or eight feet broad, I counted

twenty-two nests, all occupied. Acres of the ground also were so thickly covered that it was easy to step from nest to nest across a full acre. In one nest there might be three or four eggs; in no instance more, and in its neighbor, young ones in different stages of growth. To these last the old birds were continually coming with fish in their pouches, which they disgorge into the capacious maws of the young by *both* dropping the lower mandible, and the parent bird apparently contracting its pouch from the bottom so as to empty its contents into the pouch of its young. How wonderful the instinct that could find its own nest among so many thousand, and also adapt its selection of fish from day to day to the varying size of its young,—for I saw the old feeding young nearly as large as themselves, as well as those just hatched. Rather than climb the filthy trees, we took our eggs from those nests on the ground, gathering a water-pail full in a few minutes, always selecting the freshly laid ones, and might easily have gathered barrels of them. Securing eggs and studying their habits, we commenced securing birds. It was an easy matter to get three or four in a range and drop most or all at a shot. At every crack of the gun thousands would rise from the trees darkening the sun, but soon settle down again. After a while our continual firing so disconcerted them that they settled down by thousands on the water around the island, forming semi-circular ranks, with two or three feet between, as though platooned under leaders. For my own use, I brought away eighteen birds, representing a series in every stage of plumage, from a fledgling just escaping from the egg to the mature bird.

Fearing to leave Erwin longer in the broiling sun, we left the fascinating spot, and camped on a sand-bar at the mouth of St. Sebastian River, intending to spend at least three days in camp, as famous large alligators are found in the brackish water at the mouth of the stream. On a hummock within a mile a Squatter had succeeded in cultivating, with great success, a plantation of oranges, bananas, mangoes, etc. Not to be hindered in skinning my pelicans, I hired the Squatter's son to watch the mouth of the river for a large alligator. About 1 o'clock he came running to the camp, saying, "the biggest 'gator he ever saw was coming down the river." Calling Fred and Jim, and snatching up our guns and rifle, we ran to the end of the sand-bar, two or three



hundred feet away, and sure enough, judging from the distance between his snout and his eyes, he must have been at least fifteen feet in length. Just as we were launching the row-boat, to make sure of him, a scream from the camp hurried us back, to find Erwin was suddenly attacked with the severest chill I had yet seen him have. Greatly alarmed, I ordered all things packed as quickly as possible, and in an hour we were under sail with a stiff breeze, towing me in the row-boat that I might continue skinning my pelicans, as there was not room in the sail-boat with Erwin stretched at full length. The wind increasing, in less than an hour the tow-line broke, and before the sail-boat could be turned about, I was a full half-mile astern, without paddle or oar. Recovered at last, darkness set in and we camped on a sand-bar. Rain setting in, Fred and Jim were well soaked in the course of the night, while I watched with Erwin in the tent without a wink of sleep. Next day the wind was dead ahead, and we were compelled to remain at camp till 4 o'clock P. M., when we started, and by 8 had reached Eau Gallie, where we had passed a night as we went out. Here I got Erwin into the shelter of a log hut, and as only thirty-five miles remained to Sand Point, I planned to send him on the morrow by another boat to that place, where he could have good nursing and a good bed, till Fred and I should arrive by the way of Banana River, a route twenty miles longer, but on which we hoped to get White Pelicans and shore birds; but on awaking, a rainless Norther was blowing so furiously our boatman dared not go on. Wind-bound, I tried to think how I could turn the day to some account, having had to throw away all but four of my series of pelicans, on account of the hot sun ruining them before I could skin them, through my hasty departure from St. Sebastian. Learning that there was an Indian Mound over across the Indian River, three or four miles distant, I requested Jim to take me over in a boat, but he declined, saying, "no boat could live in such a sea." Another Cracker was willing to risk it for a dollar and a half. As the wind blew fortunately for crossing, though dangerously, I took my spade and trowel, and forbidding Fred to risk the voyage with me, I crossed over, the partially decked bow going under several times, but skilful management carried us across safely, though well drenched with the spray. Ascending the mound, about thirty feet in height, and well wooded

with wild orange growth, I succeeded in exhuming a perfect skeleton, having its knees bent to its chin, and facing the south,—thus fulfilling at the last chance one of the things I promised Prof. Jeffries Wyman I would try to do. “It is an ill wind that blows nobody any good,” but Erwin’s sickness seriously interfered with my finishing up Florida according to my plans; but as I could not see how I was responsible, I knew it was all right, and according to the plans of my Heavenly Father, who is “too wise to err and too good to be unkind.”

The Norther blew out during the night and we started about eight for Sand Point direct, giving up for his sake Banana River and the white pelicans. Before starting, I gave Erwin a morphine pill to alleviate the pain in his left side, the second time I had opened my medicine case during the trip—the first being as stated in the earlier part of the narrative, to give one of my phials of quinine to a man on Ten Mile Creek who camped near me one night with his wife and seven small children, two of them very sick with fever. We parted in the morning, but he sent me word by a cow-boy two weeks afterwards that my quinine saved the lives of his children.

Having failed to secure a Wurdemann Heron at the Pelican rookery, I kept on the lookout for one, and during this day’s sail espied a nest on the right bank, on a tall pine, which Jim declared belonged to a Wurdemann. Sending him ashore with the rifle, he brought me one of the old birds and a half-fledged young he found under the nest. This specimen differs materially from the book measurements of the Great Blue Heron, *Ardea herodias*, but so little in plumage that I was still in doubt, and obliged to wait till I reached Washington to discuss the matter with Prof. Baird and test the find. Night overtaking us ten miles from Sand Point, we were forced to camp again on the sand just opposite the lower end of Merritt’s Island. Pitching my tent on the windward side of a rousing fire, and making as nice a bed of palmetto leaves for Erwin inside as I could, I gave the tent up to him and was gratified to learn in the morning that he had slept well. To quote from a letter to my wife written on the sail-boat after leaving this camp: “this encouraged me to hope that after a sail of two hours I might yet have the gratification I had been all the week anticipating of having a quiet Sabbath at Sand Point, and revisiting

that Sabbath School in the pine woods, whose acquaintance I had made on my outward trip, but the 'wind was contrary,' and so we add another day of holy time to the last seven Sabbaths unrecognized entirely as such, except in our tent, and two of those necessarily spent in travelling with an ox-team in Okechobee swamps, as the journal of my sojourn in the wilderness will explain. This journal, by the way, is wholly in my mind, as, till leaving Fort Capron last Monday, I have had no possible opportunity for writing except the few postals I have forwarded. Now I hope to send a postal almost daily, from the time I leave Jacksonville, and a letter weekly, giving daily particulars. This will keep you posted on my movements as you could not have been while I was out of civilization, among murderers and ex-Ku-Kluxans, for at this distance I dare write so, while had I written out my experience in the wilderness, and it had fallen into the hands of the wretches prowling through that region, it might have cost me my life. Yet I was well treated by every one, though I had to bear the most outrageous language respecting the 'Yauks.' I must confess I felt safer in having my revolver under my head and our guns between us as we slept in the tent, according to Cromwell's injunction to 'trust in God and keep our powder dry.' I always sleep the fore-side of the tent, as Fred is a sound sleeper, while I usually wake at the tread of a 'possum within ten feet of me; still, into such a wild region you must go if you would study nature first hand instead of second. Hence the reason so few naturalists do anything more than study books and take the observations of others and use them second-handed. To a great extent I have done so, but always to my great dissatisfaction, *you* know. I now feel as though I had a right to speak and lecture on some subjects pertaining to Natural History, 'ex-cathedra' authoritatively. I cannot but feel greatly pleased with my experience for the last two months as well as grateful, I trust, for God's preserving care. We are just landing at Sand Point, at 11 o'clock, A. M."

Learning that a man living a mile in the interior had a spring sulky, I sent a lad for it to convey Erwin to a suitable lodging place for the night, and on the next day to the steamer at Lake Harney, twenty-two miles distant, on which we proposed to sail down the St. John's to Jacksonville. Having thus disposed of

my sick companion, with gratitude for his convalescence, I chose a suitable camping-place for the afternoon and night, and, leaving Fred and our guide to take our luggage ashore, went myself in search of a suitable team to transfer us on the morrow to Lake Harney. Having secured a mule team, I hastened back to find the last package just piled in a piazza of a store, when a furious thunder shower broke upon us. During my absence the mail-boat had come up from Ft. Capron, bringing Dr. P. with three other passengers. It being Sunday, the proprietor of the store was absent, leaving for twelve men and all their luggage only the piazza, six feet by twenty, for shelter. Feeling it was more important to preserve dry our luggage than ourselves, we gave to it the benefit of our blankets and overcoats and took our own chance unsheltered for the most part, with the probability of lying down at night drenched to the skin. Toward evening the rain ceased, and the proprietor of the store returning, he kindly offered us *all* lodging on his attic floor. My rubber blanket served to soften the couch of hard pine, and either it or fatigue induced sound sleep, to find, on awaking in the morning, a cloudless sky. After cooking and eating our breakfast of coffee, pork and hard-tack, I commenced packing the cart, while Fred skinned three Shoveler ducks and a woodpecker he had shot before breakfast. This done, he lent his aid to the packing, but was soon interrupted at seeing a monstrous black hog run off with one of his duck-skins. Giving chase, he overtook it in a boggy swamp, but had hardly deposited the skin in a safe place, when the same or another hog seized another duck-skin, and in a trice chawed off one leg, thus spoiling it as a specimen for mounting. Will hog tribulations never cease, thought I. Our things packed, my final experience in "Cracker" honesty was realized. Jim demurred to my construction of the bargain I had made with him two weeks before, to take us to Sand Point in his sail-boat and there leave us, at so much per day, more or less number of days. He made out almost as large a bill for extras as the bargain called for, when there were to be no extras of any kind, unless providential ones, and such he could not say there had been. After an hour of abuse, with charges of Yankee meanness and some threatening of legal redress, he calmed down and took his pay at my first calculation. I then donated him my camp cooking utensils that had cost me

about five dollars and were uninjured, supposing I could not possibly have any further use for them.

At 3 P. M. we bade farewell to Indian River, having a boy of twelve for our teamster, who proved to be no exception to an adult "Cracker's" thriftlessness, for when we camped at dark in the woods, he had no cooking apparatus. However, boiling our coffee in a lard can and our eggs in a peach can, and after drinking the coffee, our hominy in the lard can for breakfast in the morning, as it could be handled cold, we lay down on the ground and looking sky-ward went to sleep, as often before, counting the stars. Rising at 3.30 in the morning, I ended my camping career of fifty-one nights, and exchanged my butternut hunting-dress and blue-flannel shirt for broadcloth and linen, and donned my beaver in place of the worn-out straw-hat which I left sticking upon a stake.

At 9 A. M. we reached the steamer Volusia, gratified to find Erwin comfortably established on board, and at 2 P. M. sailed away from "Crackerdom" down the St. John's. Sharing a state-room with Capt. B.—previous and subsequent to the war, light-house keeper at Cape Canaveral—I learned from him some interesting particulars of his experience during the war. On the secession of Florida he was ordered by the State authority to put out his light. He obeyed, and more. In the darkness of the night and the retracy of the surroundings, he took down the lantern and everything movable, and transferred all by a mule-cart to a lonely spot four miles distant, and safely hiding them, kept the secret during the war. At its close, when a U. S. vessel came down the coast to re-light the lanterns, he was inquired of for the equipments. Leading the officer to the hiding-place, he brought all out to light uninjured, and for his discretion, was recommended by the officer as a suitable person to continue in charge of the Light, and was successful in receiving the appointment from Washington. He also informed me that early in the war Jefferson Davis and his Cabinet entrusted him with keeping concealed in the inlet near the Cape, as large a vessel as possible, to take any of them, in case of disaster, to Nassau, under British dominion, being assured, if once there, they would be protected according to the Mason and Slidell precedent. During the last year of the war the Union gun-boats found their way into the Indian River and captured the vessel, with much other contraband material

that had been accumulating as the safest place on the coast. On the surrender of Lee, and the separation of Davis and his Cabinet, at their last meeting in the second story of the bank building at Washington, Wilkes County, Georgia, each strove to reach, by different routes, the rendezvous in charge of Capt. B., to make his escape to Nassau. Mr. Davis—taking his family, who had been boarding for some time four miles out of Washington—followed the route leading through Taliaferro County, and passing across the very plantation where I spent the year 1841 teaching a private school, was captured a few miles further south. Breckenridge alone found his way unmolested to the appointed rendezvous, and was enabled to escape to Nassau by Capt. B.'s furnishing him with an open row-boat of large size, which he had fitted with a jury-mast, Capt. B. showing me a gold dollar hanging at his watch-chain, which he said Mr. Breckenridge gave him as he stepped aboard the boat, as the only remuneration he could offer him for his kindness.

On our second day's sail down the river, at a wooding-up place, Capt. B. drew my attention to a woman standing in a doorway, with a child in her arms, and said, "That is the wife of Mr. Lang, that was murdered a few weeks ago in the neighborhood of ten-mile creek you have just escaped from. As the boat was about to start, I failed of an opportunity to learn definite particulars from her of the terrible tragedy, but this seems the proper place in my narrative to give the denouement. Less than a year afterwards I found the following in the *Boston Transcript*, but by whom written I know not, nor, through correspondence with true men in the vicinity of Fort Capron, have I been able to obtain other than conflicting accounts of the arrests and trials.

"Now that spiritualism is being brought so prominently forward, it is interesting to learn, from the Chicago Tribune, that an ingenious attorney in Florida was the first person to discover a practical value in it. His client, Tom Drawdy, was accused of murdering one Lang, and the jury was composed of eight colored and four ignorant white men. There was no doubt of the murder; there was no flaw in the evidence. But the counsel found one. He maintained that no proof of Lang's death had been given, and, in all probability, he was still hiding to obtain revenge. This made a commotion, but the main argument was yet to come. The gentlemen of the jury had heard that spirits were very common all

over the North ; that some had even been heard of in St. Augustine. Supposing the jury brought in a verdict of guilty and hanged an innocent man, what could they expect but that his spirit would haunt them through life, appearing with staring eyes and clammy tongue, the death damp on his hands and the horrors of the tomb round about him? Of course they must take the responsibility, and they did, by acquitting Tom Drawdy forthwith. Here, therefore, is the first authenticated instance of the practical value of spiritualism, and it may be added that that value was of a dubious sort.

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#### JUSTICE IN THE SOUTH.

*To the Editor of the Transcript* :—In the Transcript of the 14th inst. was an account of the trial of a man in Florida for murder, who was acquitted in the face of the evidence, by a spiritualistic dodge. I was in east Florida last winter, near the scene of this crime, and as the affair illustrates the life and manners of many Southern States, I will give the story as I heard it.

Lang, the victim, was an honest, industrious German, who had made for himself a home on the Indian River, where he was living with his wife. He was a man of education and a naturalist. His neighbors were Floridians, usually called "Crackers ;" ignorant and lazy, and hating Yankees. They envied Mr. Lang the possession of a better plantation than they had, the result of his own industry, and determined to drive him away. So they got up a story that he had stolen cattle. As in the West the charge of being a horse thief is the most fatal that can be brought against a man, so in Florida, where cattle and hogs constitute the sole property of most of the Crackers, to charge a man with killing his neighbor's cattle is to put him out of the protection of such law as may exist.

Finding that they could not drive Lang away, they hired the Drawdys, a desperate family of ruffians, to kill him, and the deed was performed with the treachery belonging to that class. Two of them went to Lang's house and asked for dinner ; it was given them, and they requested their host to set them across the river in his boat. He went with them for the purpose, but did not return. His wife heard a shot fired soon after the party left the house, and as her husband did not return she went to look for him. The boat was found on the other side of the river with stains of blood upon it, but nothing was ever seen of Lang. The people in the neighborhood took no steps to bring the murderers to justice, and Mrs. Lang applied to the Governor of the State, who sent a posse from Tallahassee, who it appears arrested the men about three months after the murder was committed. It seems they have escaped punishment, as they have many times before for lesser crimes.

Without affirming or denying the truth of these statements in their fullest extent, I am assured from all I can learn that Mr. J., the father-in-law and reputed instigator of the murder, was shot dead in his tracks by the sheriff while resisting arrest, as he had assured me he would be, rather than be arrested; that Tom died in the State's prison not long after incarceration, and that his colleague in the murderous affair was shot by the guard for insubordination in the chain-gang.

Leaving the steamer at Tocoï I proceeded by a mule railroad to the old town of St. Augustine, bidding good-bye to my companions Fred and Erwin, who continued on to Jacksonville and thence to New England by steamer. My familiarity with quaint old towns in Europe, hundreds of years ante-dating the settlement of St. Augustine, prevented my realizing the novel sensation so generally depicted by tourists on first beholding its dilapidated walls and coquina-stone Castle. A walk before breakfast on the long sea-wall and a ramble around the Fort through its moat, and across the draw-bridge, with a hasty inspection of the Cemetery and the Old Cathedral and Square, satisfied my curiosity, and I spent the forenoon, as the mule-car did not return to Tocoï till 1 P. M., in searching for objects of natural history in the suburban lagoons. Taking the Pilatka steamer for Jacksonville at Tocoï I re-admired the remarkable river whose very source I had found near Fort Drum at the northern boundary of Alpatiokee Flats, and had jumped across, but now widening to two miles in extent. Conversing with a stranger on board, about three o'clock of the second day, and enquiring for Jacksonville time, he displayed an old-fashioned silver moveable-cased watch, remarking, it was the best time-keeper on board, though a relic of his grandfather's day. Telling him I could match it as a time-keeper, I felt in my pants watch pocket for a silver-edged lepine watch that I had owned for more than thirty years, and which, then an old watch, was given to me by a watch-repairer to replace one I had left with him to repair, but, through careless exposure at his window had, during his temporary absence from the room, been grabbed by a sneak-thief with half a dozen others on the same rack, and successfully secured. But lo! the pocket was empty. I recalled changing my double-time lever-watch the second morning before at St. Augustine from my money-belt where I had securely carried it through



all my swamp experience, to my vest watch-pocket, and putting the old lepine without a chain into my pants pocket. A little reflection convinced me that it had slipped out while gathering specimens in the suburbs of St. Augustine. So soon, therefore, as I arrived at Jacksonville, I wrote to the postmaster at St. Augustine, explaining my loss and requesting him to send his clerk to certain points in the lagoon I designated, offering him a reward of five dollars if he should be successful in finding it and would send it to my home address in Massachusetts by mail, carelessly neglecting to mention the numbers on the case and the works of the watch for identification, though I had them with me in my pocket-book, and also at my home. On arriving at my home a month later, almost immediately my wife handed me a letter from the postmaster for explanation. He sent his clerk as requested, but he found nothing. During the evening, however, he overheard a negro man say his son had found a watch that day in the moat of the castle and obtained his consent to give it to him if I would send on the numbers of my lost watch and the five dollars reward if the numbers I should send identified it. Remembering my tramp through the moat I hesitated not to send the money with the numbers, and in due time received my watch in good order.

At Jacksonville I disabused the minds of those who had told me when I started up the St. John's, that after a residence of years in Florida they had concluded that Lake Okechobee was a myth, and advised them to look out for the report of the exploring party who had circumnavigated it. Shipping home my collection of beasts, birds, reptiles, fishes, etc., by the shortest route, I made a detour from Jacksonville to the south-west and north-east sections of Georgia between which I had spent the years from '38 to '42 as teacher. The little frontier village of '38 in the Lower Creek Indian Country of hardly more than forty log houses, where, at the age of nineteen, I made my début as Principal of a school in which I had pupils in a, b, c, as well as in advanced Latin and Greek, sending two of the latter class to college at the end of my first year of instruction, had become a municipality of five thousand inhabitants. The Creeks had, after hard fighting, been removed west of the Mississippi within five years of my location in the hamlet, and, with the exception of a few individuals, the character of the people partook of the worst elements of a

frontier settlement. Seventy miles distant from any stage route, my only way of reaching it at that time was by an old negro and his mule-cart, making the journey in two days and camping at the foot of a pine tree at night. My mail came once a week on horse-back, the original *star route* I imagine, and all the appointments pertaining to civilization were of the most primitive stamp, such as New England had outgrown a hundred years before. A conch-shell blown at the Court House in the centre of the village square, for it was the shire hamlet of the county, notified me on the morning of my first Sunday that a strolling Methodist preacher would hold services in the Court House at 11 o'clock. Repairing from my room just outside the village to the place of worship, I passed in the open square two *faro* tables where peripatetic professional gamblers were fleecing a much larger gathering than I found inside the Court House. The preacher had his own bible and hymn book and led all the services, giving out each hymn line by line, and starting the tune himself, at each break. During the first prayer, I heard just outside a sudden out-burst of loud talking mingled with fearful oaths, which made me open my eyes, but seeing neither minister nor worshippers in the least disturbed, I composed myself and concluded there was no disrespect intended for us. Before the sermon was half through the outside rabble had matured a plan for a horse-race, which was kept up with the usual accompaniment of swearing and disputing till long after our services were ended. Longer experience in the community taught me that the occasional religious services enjoyed by a moiety of the citizens was not objected to by the gamblers and horse-racers, so long as they were not interfered with in their mode of enjoying the Sabbath. Enquiring for some of my old pupils of thirty-six years before, I found the war had spared a few, but not one of half a dozen or more that I met recognized me, so changed was I from an almost beardless youth of nineteen to an old man of fifty-five.

In northeast Georgia, where, for nearly a year, I was both instructor and colleague of an aged minister in 1841, I was equally unrecognized by all who had known me in either capacity. It was in this region that I attained my majority and cast my first vote, on which was the name of Alexander H. Stephens, in his first candidacy for Congress. The intimacy we formed during the

year I dwelt in his vicinity was never broken, but renewed from time to time, as circumstances brought us together,—the last time but a few months before his decease in 1882.

Desirous of visiting the site of my last school-house in Georgia, I left the cars at a station within seven miles of it, and borrowing a horse from one of my old pupils, now a lawyer of middle age, I essayed to find it. My route required me to cross the same stream twice. At the first crossing I forded the stream by gathering my limbs crosswise upon the pommel of the saddle, but found the second, by my recollection of its bed, more than swimming to my horse, with too swift a current to think of stemming, and so turned aside for the night to stop with the father of my pupil, who with his wife still occupied the same plantation of 3,800 acres I used to visit in '41. True Southern hospitality welcomed me as of yore, though despoiled of everything but the naked land by the exigencies of the war. Talking over the situation with the old gentleman, he related the following war incidents: One morning one of his many negroes accosted him, "Massa, we's all free." "Ah, how so?" "Massa Lincoln says so." Surprised at the statement, and knowing the blacks always had information of important movements at the North sometimes days in advance of the whites, the master mounted his horse and galloped to town, six miles, to learn that no one there knew what the statement meant. In the afternoon news came by the mail from Augusta of Lincoln's Proclamation freeing the slaves, and the master galloped back to his plantation to inform his negroes that Massa Lincoln's saying so had nothing to do with their freedom, as they were all under Jefferson Davis, and ordered them to their work as usual. Two years subsequently the master was again surprised by the same old negro saying one morning, "Massa, now we's free for sartin." "Ah, how's that?" "Lee's surrendered Richmond, and Jeff Davis has fled!" Again galloping to town, no such news had reached there, but at 10 o'clock the mail confirmed it, and galloping back, the master blew the conch-shell that brought all his negroes in a trice from the most distant parts of the plantation into his yard, when he said to the scores before him, from the very spot in the piazza where we were sitting: "It's a fact, Lee's surrendered; you are all free, and *now you must look out for your dinner.*" This last announcement

to poor dependents that had never in their lives, from the youngest conscious child to the gray-haired old men and women, ever had a thought about providing their dinner, the regular cook of the plantation dealing out their rations at the appointed time each day all prepared, so took them aback that not a shout was heard or the wag of a tongue, but on the contrary, their very countenances of jet black grew pale with consternation. After leaving them to their reflections for half an hour, the master blew the conch-shell again and told them he had been anticipating this result, so giving them a dinner, he related the following plan as the best thing for him and them,—he being left with nothing but his land, stock, and farming implements, as Confederate money would at once be worthless: The oldest married negro could first choose twenty acres of land in any part of his thirty-eight hundred, and move his cabin on to it and make a home for himself; then the next oldest married man, and so on, and then the unmarried could make their choice. He would also let each have a mule and a plough, and the use of his gin-house and cotton-press, and for his own support they should pay him a certain per cent. of what they got for their crop; or every one could quit the plantation and look out for himself. With the exception of one young unmarried man, all accepted his offer and moved their dozen or more cabins on to the land of their choice, and at the time of his narrating the circumstances to me, ten years afterwards, every family was on the place of their first choosing, with hardly an exception, and everything had gone prosperously with him, and for his own sake he would not have slavery restored for all his plantation. A second visit, eight years afterwards, to the same plantation produced the same testimony from the considerate and humane old master.

Expressing my approbation of a beautiful peacock strutting in the yard, the generous old wife said to me, “Catch it and mount it for your Museum at Brown University, as a present from me.” In five minutes its life was forfeited to the interests of science.

Having promised a gratuitous lecture in the village in the evening, I mounted my horse after dinner to return, a young man accompanying me a mile to the creek I had forded the day before, but the rain during the night had swollen it to swimming and also overflowed its banks on either side for more than a hundred feet,

Observing on the right a high staked fence, extending within twenty feet of the other side, with the top rail just above the rushing stream with overhanging branches, I gave my horse to the young man to take back to its owner at his convenience, and mounting the fence, with the incumbrance of the peacock with its five-foot tail and fifteen-pound weight, and a tall silk hat, I walked the sharp edge of the rail by the aid of the slender overhead branches, thanks to the acrobatic practice of my youth, till I reached the end of the fence, when, tossing the fowl as far towards the shore as I could, and holding my watch and purse above my head, I followed, landing in water only waist-deep, instead of neck-deep, as I feared. My companion on the opposite side, seeing me safe across, swung his hat and shouted, "A Yankee for anything and forever!" Replacing my watch and shouldering my bird, I plodded the five miles to the village, arriving just in time to change my wet underclothes for dry, but for the want of another suit of outer garments was obliged to lecture in wet pants. My neighbors and pupils of a generation before were, however, well pleased to hear the voice of their old friend and teacher.

Learning that an old college-mate was residing in the vicinity of Toccoa Falls in northern Georgia, I made a detour of two hundred miles by rail to call upon him. These Falls are of wonderful beauty, and, with the present railroad facilities, are attracting hundreds of visitors annually.

From Toccoa, Georgia, to Charlotte County, Virginia, I accomplished by rail what took me by stage through the same towns in December, 1841, from Monday noon of continuous travel, night and day, with the exception of Sunday, to Thursday noon of the week following. I was the only *through* passenger, and usually at night the only one, so that my trunk was taken inside the stage for fear of robbers, and filling the space between the seats, made me a more comfortable couch. The rivers were all crossed by ferries, and one night, the lights of the stage having gone out, the new driver missed the path leading to the ferry and found out his mistake when a sudden wheeling around of the horses upset the stage within twenty feet of the bank, waking me out of a sound sleep. Re-lighting the uninjured lamp by matches furnished by myself, we surveyed our surroundings, and loosening the jaded horses, shouted for help. Soon the negro ferrymen on the opposite

side replied, and coming to the proper landing several rods up stream, soon righted matters for us. At another ferry the rope broke when nearly across, but as it was in the daytime, we soon caught by the overhanging branches and pulled ourselves up stream to the right landing-place.

The cars leaving me in Virginia five miles from the nearest of my old school-mates of 1832, I engaged a horse for two days' riding. When brought for me to mount, the bridle had no two parts alike, one stirrup was of wood suspended by a rope and the other of iron suspended by leather, and the horse himself was evidently a remnant of the cavalry of ten years previous, or more probably of the artillery or an ambulance corps. To my remonstrance, I was told it was the best in the neighborhood,—a most painful contrast to the blooded animals, with gorgeous trappings, I used to ride on the fox-hunts forty-two years before in the same region. Arrived at the door of the residence of my school-mate, she herself appeared, so unchanged in all the intervening time I could not help grasping her hand with a school-boy's familiarity, and tightening my grasp the more she tried to escape from it, while I was parleying for a recognition from her. At length, propriety suggested my rudeness, as she evidently began to be alarmed, and letting go my hold, I asked her the leading question, whether she could not recall events of forty-two years previous. "Oh, dear, am I so old," was her only answer, with a quick, "but who *are you?*" "I am the little Yankee boy of the log school-house on your father's plantation;" and then she herself seized both my hands involuntarily, and it was my turn to leave the unclasping to her. The next moment tears came to her eyes, with the sad exclamation, "Oh, that you should find us all in such changed circumstances from what you knew us in our childhood and would have known us up to the war. That hack of a horse you just rode up on and its rigging is a fair sample of how the war left us,—my husband, a physician, and our two sons returning from the ranks on the surrender of Lee with not a cent between us all, except twenty-five dollars I had contrived to secure to myself, and which my husband took to Petersburg to purchase me a calico dress, the first of any kind I had purchased in all the four years. In yonder shed is our carriage, that, for the want of suitable horses and harness, has not been harnessed since

the war, and every luxury of the kind forborne, with no prospect of the times being any better in my day." Such and much more was the sad tale I listened to during the three hours I stopped, before proceeding ten miles further to the residence of her twin sister, and two miles further to the residence of her brother, near the paternal mansion, where, during their youth, every luxury abounded, as well as at their several homes, till the exigencies of war made Virginia the greatest sufferer of all the seceding States.

Spending only one day and night between the three families, I returned to the station and hastened on to Washington, to find, to my great disappointment, that I had not after all my effort secured a Wurdemann Heron. Subsequent study of the species, however, proves my specimen not to be the long-known Blue Heron, but a variety now lately determined to be the *Ardea wardi* or Florida Blue Heron.

Leaving Washington after spending one night, I reached my home on the evening of the last day of April, in a snowstorm that had been unintermitting during the day.

The following extract from a detailed report of the New Orleans Times-Democrat Exploring Expedition through the Florida Everglades in 1884 will make a fitting close to our narrative.

"When we reached White Water Bay we had accomplished all we promised to do, and more than any man or men ever were able to do before. We are the first party of white men who ever penetrated the Northern Glades, and the first who ever started from the southern shore of Lake Okeechobee and came out at the Gulf of Mexico through Shark's River, without diverging a mile to the east or west from their due south course.

"In conclusion I sum up my observations of the Everglades in a few words:

"It is a vast marsh, interspersed with thousands of islands small in extent, and with few exceptions completely inundated, even at the time we explored them, which was during a very dry season. On the islands that were out of water there was but a few inches of soil covering the rocks. In my opinion, their drainage is utterly impracticable, and, even if it were practicable, the reward for such an undertaking would be lands that could be utilized for no other purpose than as a grazing ground for stock. They are nothing more nor less than a vast and useless marsh, and such they will remain for all time to come, in all probability.

"It would not be possible to build, or maintain if built, a telegraph line along the route traversed by us, which statement is

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made in reply to numerous inquiries as to the feasibility of such an enterprise.

A. P. WILLIAMS."

I have designedly omitted in the foregoing narrative scientific names of specimens and specific descriptions, intending it only as an account of the adventures of a Naturalist Collector in the Everglades.

J. W. P. JENKS.























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